THE VANITY OF THIS Mortal Life: OR, OF MAN,

Considered only in his Present Mortal state.

By J. HOWE, M. A.

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Academiæ Cantabrigiensis
Liber.

To the deſervedly honoured, *JOHN UPTON* of *Lupton*, Eſq; with the many ſurviving Branches formerly ſprung out of that Religious Family; and the Worthy Conſorts of any of them.

AT

SInce it is the lot of the following Pages to be expoſed to publike view; There is ſomewhat of juſtice in it, to your ſelves, or me, that the world do alſo know wherein divers of you have contributed thereto, that, if any thing redound hence to publike advantage, it may be underſtood to be owing in part to you: or, if it ſhall be reckon'd an uſeleſs trouble, in this way to repreſent things, ſo obvious to common notice, and whereof ſo much is already ſaid; all the blame of the

publication be not imputed (as it doth not belong) to me only.

But I must here crave your excuse, that, on this account, I give you a narrative of what (for the most part) you already know, and may possibly not delight to remember; both because it is now become convenient that others should know it too, and not necessary to be put into a distinct Preface: And because to your selves the review of those less pleasing passages may be attended with a fruit which may be some recompence for their want of pleasure.

There I give the Reader leave to take notice, and let it not be grievous to you that I re mind you, That after this your near Relation * (whose death gave the occasion of the ensuing Meditations) had, from his youth, lived between Twenty and Thirty years of his age in Spain, your joint-importunity had at length obtained from him a promise of returning: Whereof, when you were in somewhat a near expectation, a sudden disease in so few days landed him in another world, that the first notice you had of his death, or sickness,

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ſickneſs, was by the arrival of that Veſſel (clad in mourning-attire) which, according to his own deſire in his ſickneſs, brought over the deſerted body to its native place of Lupton; *that thence it might find a Grave where it firſt received a Soul; and obtain a Manſion in the Earth, where firſt it became one to a reaſonable ſpirit.*

A little before this time, the deſire of an interview among your ſelves (which the diſtance of your habitations permitted not to be frequent) had induced divers of you to appoint a meeting at ſome middle place, whereby the trouble of a long journey might be conveniently ſhared among you.

But, before that agreed reſolution could have its accompliſhment, this ſad and moſt unexpected Event intervening, altered the place, the occaſion, and deſign of your meeting; but effected the thing it ſelf, and brought together no leſs than Twenty, the Brothers and Siſters of the deceaſed, or their Conſorts; beſides his many Nephews and Neices, and other Relations, to the mournful ſolemnity of the

Interment. Within the time of our being together upon this ſad account, this paſſage of the Pſalmiſt *here inſiſted on, came into diſcourſe among us; being introduced by an occaſion which (though then, it may be, unknown to the moſt of you) was ſomewhat rare, and not unworthy obſervation; viz. That one of your ſelves, having been ſometime before ſurpriſed with an unuſual ſadneſs, joined with an expectation of ill tidings, upon no known cauſe, had ſo urgent an inculcation of theſe words, as not to be able to forbear the revolving them, much of the former part of that day, in the latter part whereof the firſt notice was brought to that place of this ſo near a Relations deceaſe.*

Certain Months after, ſome of you with whom I was then converſant in London, *importuned me to have ſomewhat from me in writing upon that Subject. Whereto I at length agreed, with a cautionary requeſt, That it might not come into many hands, but might remain (as the occaſion was) among your ſelves. Nor will I deny it to have been ſome inducement to me*

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to apply my thoughts to that Theam, that it had been ſo ſuggeſted as was ſaid. For ſuch preſages and abodings, as that above-mentioned, may reaſonably be thought to owe themſelves to ſome more ſteady and univerſal principle, than Caſualty, or the party's own Imagination: By whoſe more noble recommendation (that ſuch a gloomy Premonition might carry with it not what ſhould only afflict, but alſo inſtruct and teach) this Subject did ſeem offered to our meditation.

Accordingly therefore, after my return to the place of my abode, I haſtily drew up the ſubſtance of the following Diſcourſe; which, a year ago, I tranſmitted into their hands who deſired it from me, without reſerving to my ſelf any Copy. Hereby it became difficult to me, preſently to comply (beſides divers conſiderations I might have againſt the thing it ſelf) with that joint requeſt of ſome of you (in a Letter, which my removal into another Kingdom occaſioned to come long after to my hands) that I would conſent theſe Papers might be made publike. For as I have reaſon to be

be conſcious to my ſelf of diſadvantages enough to diſcourage any undertaking of that kind: ſo I am more eſpecially ſenſible, that ſo curſory and ſuperficial a management of a Subject ſo very important, (though its private occaſion and deſign at firſt, might render it excuſable to thoſe few friends for whom it was meant) cannot but be liable to the hard cenſure (not to ſay the contempt) of many whom Diſcourſes of this kind ſhould more diſgracefully ſerve. And therefore, though my willingneſs to be ſerviceable in keeping alive the apprehenſion and expectation of another ſtate, my value of your judgments who conceive what is here done may be uſeful thereto; and my peculiar reſpects to your ſelves, the members and appendants of a Family to which (beſides ſome relation) I have many obligations and endearments; do prevail with me not wholly to deny: Yet pardon me that I have ſuſpended my conſent to this publication, till I ſhould have a Copy tranſmitted to me from ſome of you, for my neceſſary review of ſo haſty a production, that I

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might not offer to the view of the world, what, after I had penn'd it had scarce passed my own. And now, after so long an expectation, those Papers are but this last week come to my hands: I here return them, with little or no alteration; save, that what did more directly concern the occasion, towards the close, is transferred hither; but with the addition of almost all the directive part of the Use: which I submit together to your pleasure and disposé.

And I shall now take the liberty to add, my design in consenting to this request of yours (and I hope the same of you in making it) is not to erect a Monument to the memory of the Deceased, (which how little doth it signifie!) nor to spread the fame of your Family (though the visible blessing of God upon it in the fruitfulness, piety, and mutual love, wherein it hath flourished for some generations, do challenge observation, both as to those branches of it which grow in their own more natural soil, and those, as I have now occasion to take further notice, that I find to have been transplanted

planted into another Countrey). But that ſuch into whoſe hands this little Treatiſe ſhall fall, may be induced to conſider the true end of their beings; to examine and diſcuſs the matter more throughly with themſelves, what it may or can be ſuppoſed ſuch a ſort of Creatures was made and placed on this Earth for: That when they ſhall have reaſoned themſelves into a ſetled apprehenſion of the worthy and important Ends they are capable of attaining, and are viſibly deſigned to, They may be ſeized with a noble diſdain of living beneath themſelves, and the bounty of their Creator.

It is obvious to common obſervation, how flagrant and intenſe a zeal, men are often wont to expreſs for their perſonal reputation, the honour of their Families, yea or for the glory of their Nation; but how few are acted by that more laudable and enlarged zeal for the dignity of Mankind?

How few are they that reſent the common and vile depreſſion of their own ſpecies! Or that, while in things of lighteſt conſideration they ſtrive with emulous endeavour, that they and their

their relatives may excel other men, do reckon it a reproach if in matters of the greatest consequence they and all men should not excel Beasts! How few that are not contented to confine their utmost designs and expectations within the same narrow limits! Through a mean and inglorious self-despiciency, confessing in themselves (to the Truth's and their own wrong) an incapacity of greater things! and, with most injurious falshood, proclaiming the same of all Mankind besides!

If he that, amidst the hazards of a dubious Warr, betrays the Interest and Honour of his Countrey, be justly infamous, and thought worthy severest punishments; I see not why a debaucht Sensualist, that lives as if he were created only to indulge his appetite, that so vilifies the notion of man, as if he were made but to eat, and drink, and sport; to please only his sense and fancy; that in this time and state of conflict between the powers of this present world, and those of the world to come, quits his Party, bids open defiance to Humanity, abjures the Noble Principles and Ends, forsaker

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the Laws and Society of all that are worthy to be eſteemed men; abandons the common and rational hope of mankind concerning a future immortality, and herds himſelf among brute Creatures; I ſay, I ſee not why ſuch a one ſhould not be ſcorn'd and abhorr'd as a Traytor to the whole Race and Nation of reaſonable Creatures; as a fugitive from the Tents, and deſertor of the common Intereſt of men; and that, both for the vileneſs of his practice, and the danger of his example.

And who, that hath open eyes, beholds not the dreadful inſtances and increaſe of this defection? When it hath prevailed to that degree already, that in Civiliz'd, yea in Chriſtian Countreys (as they yet affect to be call'd) the practice is become faſhionable and in credit; which can ſquare with no other Principle, than the diſbelief of a future ſtate, as if it were but a meer Poetick, or (at beſt) a Political Fiction. And as if ſo impudent infidelity would pretend not to a connivence only, but a ſanction, 'tis reckon'd an odd and uncouth thing for a man to live as if he thought otherwiſe; and

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a great presumption to seem to dissent from the prophane infidel Crew. As if the matter were already formally determined in the behalf of Irreligion, and the Doctrine of the life to come had been clearly condemned in open Council, as a detestable Heresie. For what Tenet was ever more exploded and hooted at, than that practice is which alone agrees with this? Or what series or course of repeated Villanies can ever be more ignominious than (in vulgar estimate) a course of life so transacted as doth become the expectation of a blessed immortality? And what? After so much written and spoken by persons of all times and Religions for the immortality of the humane Soul, and so common an acknowledgment thereof by Pagans, Mahometans, Jews, *and* Christians; *Is man now at last condemn'd and doom'd to a perpetual death, as it were, by the consent and suffrage even of men? and that too without trial or hearing? and not by the reason of men, but their lusts only? As if (with a loud and violent cry) they would assassinate and stifle this belief and hope, but not*

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judg it? And ſhall the matter be thus given up as hopeleſs? and the victory be yeilded to proſperous wickedneſs, and a too ſucceſful conſpiracy of vile Miſcreants againſt both their Maker, and their own Stock and Race?

One would think whoſoever have remaining in them any conſcience of obligation and duty to the common Parent and Author of our Beings, any remembrance of our Divine Original, any breathings of our ancient hope, any ſenſe of humane honour, any reſentments of ſo vile an indignity to the nature of man, any ſpark of a juſt and generous indignation for ſo opprobrious a contumely to their own Kind and Order in the Creation, ſhould oppoſe themſelves with an Heroick vigour to this treacherous and unnatural combination.

And let us (my worthy Friends) be provoked, in our ſeveral capacities to do our parts herein; and, at leaſt, ſo to live, and converſe in this world, that the courſe and tenour of our lives may import an open aſſerting of our hopes in another; and may let men ſee we are not aſhamed to own the belief of a life

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to come: Let us by a patient continuance in well-doing (how low designs ſoever others content themſelves to purſue) ſeek honour, glory, and immortality to our ſelves; and, by our avowed, warrantable ambition in this purſuit, juſtifie our great and bountiful Creator, who hath made us not in vain, but for ſo high and great things: And glorifie our bleſſed Redeemer, who amidſt the gloomy and diſconſolate darkneſs of this wretched world, when it was overſpred with the ſhadow of death, hath brought life and immortality to light in the Goſpel. Let us labour both to feel and expreſs the power of that Religion, which hath the inchoation of the (participated) divine life, for its principle; and the perfection and eternal perpetuation thereof, for its ſcope and end.

Nor let the time that hath ſince elapſed, be found to have worn out with you the (uſeful) impreſſions which this monitory ſurpriſing inſtance of our Mortality did at firſt make: But give me leave to inculcate from it what was ſaid to you when the occaſion was freſh and new: That we labour more deeply

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to apprehend Gods dominion over his Creatures; And that he made us principally for himſelf, and for ends that are to be compaſt in the future ſtate, not for the temporary ſatisfaction and pleaſure of one another in this world.

Otherwiſe, Providence had never been guilty of ſuch a Solœciſm, to take out one from a Family long famous for ſo exemplary mutual love, and diſpoſe him into ſo remote a part; not permitting to moſt of his neareſt Relations the enjoyment of him for almoſt thirty years (and therein all the flower) of his age; and at laſt, when you were expecting the man, ſend you home the breathleſs frame wherein he lived.

Yet it was not contemptible that you had that. And that dying (as Joſeph*) in a ſtrange Land, he gave, alſo, commandment concerning his bones; that though, in his life, he was (moſtly) ſeparated from his brethren, he might in death be gathered to his fathers.*

It was ſome evidence (though you wanted not better) that amidſt the Traffick of Spain*, he more eſteemed the Religion of* England*; and therefore, would rather his duſt ſhould aſſociate*

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with theirs, with whom also he would rather his spirit should.

But whatever it did evidence, it occasion'd so much, that you had that so general meeting with one another, which otherwise, probably, you would not have had, nor are likely again to have (so hath Providence scattered you) in this world. And that it proved a more serious meeting than otherwise it might: for, however it might blamelessly have been designed to have met together at a cheerful Table, God saw it fitter to order the meeting at a mournful grave; and to make the House that received you, (the native place to many of you) the House of mourning rather than of feasting. The one would have had more quick relishes of a present pleasure; but the other was likely to yeild the more lasting sense of an after-profit. Nor was it an ill errand to come together (though from afar, for divers of you) to learn to dye. As you might, by being so sensibly put in mind of it, though you did not see that very part acted it self.

And accept this indeavour to further

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you in your preparations for that change, as some testimony of the remembrance I retain of your most obliging respects and love, and of my still continuing

ANTRIM,
April 12.
1671.

Your affectionate and respectful Kinsman and Servant in our common Lord,

J. HOWE.

THE Vanity of MAN AS MORTAL.

PSAL. 89. 47, 48.

Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

WE are not concerned to be particular and curious in the enquiry touching the special reference or occasion of the foregoing complaints from the 37 *verse*.

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It is enough to take notice, for our present purpose, that besides the evil which had already befaln the Plaintiff, a farther danger nearly threatned him, that carried death in the face of it, and suggested somewhat frightful apprehensions of his mortal state; which drew from him this quick and sensible petition in reference to his own private concern, [*Remember how short my time is*] and did presently direct his eye with a sudden glance from the view of his own, to reflect on the common condition of man, whereof he expresses his resentment, first, in an hasty expostulation with God [*Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?*] Then, secondly, in a pathetick discourse with himself, representing the reason of that rough charge; [*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver,* &c] *q. d.* When I add to the consideration of my short time, that of dying-mankind, and behold a dark and deadly shade universally overspreading the World, the whole species of humane

mane Creatures vaniſhing, quitting the ſtage round about me, and diſappearing almoſt as ſoon as they ſhew themſelves: Have I not a fair and plauſible ground for that (ſeemingly rude) challenge? Why is there ſo unaccountable a *Phænomenon?* Such a Creature made to no purpoſe? The nobleſt part of this interior Creation brought forth into being without any imaginable deſign? I know not how to unty the knot, upon this only view of the caſe, or avoid the abſurdity. 'Tis hard ſure to decline the ſuppoſal (of what it may yet ſeem hard to ſuppoſe) *that all men were made in vain.*

It appears the expoſtulation was ſomewhat paſſionate, and did proceed upon the ſudden view of this diſconſolate caſe, very abſtractly conſidered, and by it ſelf only; and that he did not in that inſtant look beyond it to a better and more comfortable ſcene of things. An eye bleered with preſent ſorrow, ſees not ſo far, nor comprehends ſo much at one view, as it would at ano-

another time; or as it doth, presently, when the tear is wip't out, and its own beams have cleard it up.

We see he did quickly look further, and had got a more lightsome prospect, when in the next words we find him contemplating
V. 49. Gods *swern loving-kindness unto David.* The truth and stability whereof he at the same time expressly acknowledges, while only the form of his speech doth but seem to import a doubt [*where are they?*] But yet [*they were sworn in truth*] Upon which argument he had more copiously dilated in the former part of the *Psalm*; and it still lay deep in his soul, though he were now a little diverted from the present consideration of it.

Which, since it turns the scales with him; It will be needful to enquire into the weight and import of it. Nor have we any reason to think that *David* was either so little a Prophet or a Saint, as in his own thoughts to refer those magni-

magnificent things (the instances of that loving-kindness confirm'd by Oath, which he recites from the 19 verse of the Psalm to the 38, as spoken from the mouth of God, and declared to him by vision, to the dignity of his own person, and the grandieur and perpetuity of his Kingdom. As if it were ultimately meant of himself, that *God would make him his first-born, higher than the Kings of the earth*, (when there were divers greater Kings, and (in comparison of the little spot over which he reigned) a vastly spreading Monarchy, that still overtopt him all his time, as the same and successive Monarchies did his Successors) or that it was intended of the secular glory and stability of his Throne and Family; that God would make them *to endure for ever*, and *be as the days of Heaven*; that they should be as *the Sun before him*, and *be established for ever as the Moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.*

V. 27.

V. 29.

V. 36. 37.

That God himſelf meant it not ſo, experience and the event of things hath ſhown; and that theſe predictions cannot otherwiſe have had their accompliſhment, than in the ſucceſſion of the ſpiritual and everlaſting Kingdom of the
Act. 2.30 Meſſiah (whom God raiſed up out of his loins to ſit on his throne) unto his temporal Kingdom. Wherein 'tis therefore ended by perfection, rather than corruption. Theſe Propheſies being then made good, not formally, in the kind which they literally imported; but with an (highly redundant) equivalency in another (far more nob'e) kind. In which ſenſe God's Covenant with him
V. 28. muſt be underſtood, which he in-
34. ſiſts on ſo much in this Pſalm, even unto that degree, as to challenge God upon it, as if in the gloomy diſpenſation of this juncture (ſo far did it darken his preſent apprehenſion of things) he did actually vacate and make it void:
v 29. Though he ſufficiently expreſs his

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confidence, both before and after, that this could never be. But 'tis plain it hath been vacated long enough ago, in the subversion of *David*'s Kingdom; and in that we see his Throne and Family have not been establisht for ever; have not endured as the days of Heaven; if those words had no other than their obvious and literal meaning. And if any would imagine a *salvo* to the truth of God, from the wickedness of his posterity, first making a breach, and disobliging him; it is expressly precluded by what we find inserted in reference to this very case: *If his children forsake my Law, and* v. 30.
walk not in my judgments, &c. Then 31.
will I visit their iniquity with the rod, &c. Nevertheless my loving-kindness 32.
will I not utterly take from him, nor 33.
suffer my faithfulness to fail. My Co- 34.
venant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. All which is solemnly sealed up with this, *Once have I sworn in my holi-* 35.
ness, that I will not lye unto David.

So that they that will make a ſcruple to accuſe the Holy God of falſhood in that which with ſo much ſolemnity he hath promiſed and ſworn, muſt not make any to admit his further intendment in theſe words. And that he had a further (even a myſtical and ſpiritual) intendment in this Covenant with *David*, is yet more fully evident from that of the Prophet *Iſaiah*; *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*, &c. *Incline your ear and come to me. And I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander*, &c. What means this univerſal invitation to all thirſty perſons, with the ſubjoined encouragement of making with them an *everlaſting Covenant* (the ſame which we have here, no doubt, as to the principal parts, and which we find him mentioning alſo, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. with characters exactly correſponding to theſe of the Prophet) *even the ſure*

Iſa. 55. V. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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mercies of David? The meaning ſure cou'd not be, that they ſhould be all Secular Kings and Princes, and their poſterity after them for ever; which we ſee is the verbal ſound and tenor of this Covenant.

And now ſince it is evident God intended a myſtery in this Covenant, we may be as well aſſured he intended no deceit, and that he deſigned not a deluſion to *David* by the viſion in which he gave it. Can we think he went about to gratifie him with a ſolemn fiction, and draw him into a falſe and fanciful faith; or ſo to hide his meaning from him, as to tempt him into the belief of what he never meant? And to what purpoſe was this ſo ſpecial Revelation *by viſion*, if it were not to be underſtood truly, at leaſt, if not yet perfectly and fully? It is left us therefore to collect, that *David* was not wholly uninſtructed how to refer all this to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. And he hath given ſufficient teſtimony in that part of Sacred Writ wher of God uſed him

as Pen-man, that he was of another temper than to place the sum and chief of his expectations, and consolations, in his own and his posterities worldly greatness. And to put
Mat. 22. us out of doubt, our Saviour (who well knew his Spirit) expressly enough tells us, that *he in spirit called*
Psal. 110. *him Lord, when he said, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy foot-stool.* A plain discovery how he understood God's revelation touching the future-concernments of his Kingdom (and the Covenant relating thereto) viz. as a figure and type of Christs, who must reign till all his enemies be subdued.

Nor was he in that ignorance about the nature and design of Christs Kingdom, but that he understood its reference to another world, and state of things, even beyond all the successions of time, and the mortal race of men; so as to have his eye fixed upon the happy eternity which a joyful resurrection must introduce, and whereof Christs resurrection should

should be the great and most assuring Pledg. And of this we need no fuller evidence than the express words of the Apostle St. *Peter*, who after he had cited those lofty triumphant strains of *David*, Psal. 16. 8, 9, 10, 11, *I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell* (or in the state of darkness) *neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life. In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* All which he tells us was spoken [concerning Christ]; he more expressly subjoins, *that David being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.* He seeing this before, spake of *the resurrection of Christ*, (it appears he spake not at random, but as knowing and

Act. 2. V. 25. &c.

V. 25.

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V. 31.

seeing before, what he spake) *That his soul was not left in hell*, &c. nor can we think he thus rejoyces in another's resurrection, forgetting his own.

Acts 13. V. 32, 33, 34. And yet we have a further evidence from the Apostle St. *Paul*, who affirms that *the promise made to the fathers, God had fulfilled to their children, in that he had raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; and as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.* Which it is now apparent must be understood of eternal mercies, such as Christ's resurrection, and triumph over the grave, doth ensure to us. He therefore look't upon what was spoken concerning his Kingdom here, as spoken ultimately of Christs, the Kingdom whereby he governs and conducts his faithful Subjects, through all the troubles of Life, and terrors of Death (through both where-

whereof he himself as their King and Leader hath shown the way) unto eternal blessedness, and upon the Covenant, made with him as the Covenant of God in Christ, concerning that blessedness, and the requisites thereto. And (to say no more in this argument) how otherwise can we conceive he should have that fulness of consolation in this Covenant; when he lay a dying, as we find him expressing, 2 *Sam.* 23 5. (for these were some of the last words of *David*, as we see *v.* 1.) *He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.* What so great joy and solace could a dying man take in a Covenant made with him, when he had done with this world, and was to expect no more in it, if he took it not to concern a future blessedness in another world? Was it only for the hoped prosperity of his House and Family when he was gone? This (which is the only thing we can fasten on) he plainly excludes in the

next words, — *although he make it not to grow.*

Therefore it was his reflection upon those loving-kindnesses mentioned in the former part of the Psalm, contained in God's Covenant, and confirmed by his Oath, but understood according to the sense and import already declared, that caused this sudden turn in *David*'s spirit; And made him that lately spoke as out of a *Golgotha*, as if he had nothing but death in his eye and thoughts; to speak now in so different a strain, and (after some additional pleadings, in which his faith further recovers it self) to conclude this Psalm with solemn praise: *Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen and Amen.*

We see then the contemplation of his own and all mens mortality, abstractly and alone considered, cloathed his soul with black, wrapt it up in gloomy darkness, makes the whole Kind of Humane Creatures seem to him an obscure shadow, an empty vanity: But his recalling into

into his thoughts a ſucceeding ſtate of immortal life, clears up the day, makes him and all things appear in another hue, gives a fair account why ſuch a Creature as Man was made, and therein makes the whole frame of things in this inferior World, look with a comely and well-compoſed aſpect, as the product of a wiſe and rational deſign. Whence therefore we have this ground of diſcourſe fairly before us in the words themſelves:

That the ſhort time of man on Earth, limited by a certain unavoidable Death, If we conſider it abſtractly by it ſelf, without reſpect to a future ſtate, carries that appearance and aſpect with it, as if God had made all men in vain.

That is ſaid to be vain, according to the importance of the word שוא here uſed, which is either

Falſe,

{ *False*, a fiction, an appearance only, a shadow or evanid thing; or, which is
{ *Useless*, unprofitable, and to no valuable purpose.

The life of man, in the case now supposed, may be truly stiled *vain*, either way. And we shall say somewhat to each; but to the former more briefly.

1. It were vain, *i. e.* little other than a shew, a meer shadow, a semblance of Beeing. We must indeed, in the present case, even abstract him from himself, and consider him only as a mortal dying thing; and as to that of him which is so, what a contemptible nothing is he! There is an appearance of somewhat; but search a little, and enquire into it, and it vanishes into a meer nothing; is found a lye, a piece of falshood, as if he did but feign a beeing, and were not. And so we may suppose the *Psalmist* speaking, upon the view of his own, and the

the common caſe of man, how faſt all were haſtning out of life; and laying down the beeing which they rather ſeemed to have aſſumed and borrowed, than to poſſeſs and own: Lord, why haſt thou made Man ſuch a fictitious thing? given him ſuch a mock-beeing? Why haſt thou brought forth into the light of this world ſuch a ſort of Creatures, that rather *ſeem to be*, than are? That have ſo little of ſolid and ſubſtantial beeing? and ſo little deſerve to be taken for realities? that only ſerve to cheat one another into an opinion of their true exiſtence, and preſently vaniſh and confeſs their falſhood? What hovering ſhadows, what uncertain Entities are they? In a moment they are and are not. I know not when to ſay I have ſeen a man. It ſeems as if there were ſome ſuch things before my eyes; I perſwade my ſelf that I ſee them move and walk to and fro, that I talk and converſe with them; But inſtantly my own ſenſe is ready to give my ſenſe the lye: They are on the ſudden dwindled away,

away, and force me, almoſt, to acknowledg a Deluſion. I am but mockt with a ſhew; and what ſeem'd a reality, proves an Impoſture. Their pretence to beeing, is but fiction, and falſhood; a cozenage of over-credulous unwary ſenſe, They only perſonate what, they are thought to be; and quickly put off their very ſelves, as a diſguiſe. This is agreeable to the language of Scripture elſewhere. *Surely men of*
2,9 *low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye*, &c.

In two reſpects may the preſent ſtate of man ſeem to approach near to nothingneſs; and ſo admit this Rhetorication of the *Pſalmiſt*, as if he were in this ſenſe a vain thing, a figment, or a lye, *viz.* in reſpect of the

{ *Minuteneſs*, and } { *Inſtability* } of this

his (material and periſhable) beeing.

1. The *Minuteneſs*, the ſmall portion or degree of beeing which this mortal part of man hath in it. It is truly ſaid of all created things,

Their

Their *non esse*, is more than their *esse*. They have more no-being than being. It is only some limited portion that they have, but there is an infinitude of being which they have not. And so, coming infinitely nearer to nothingness, than fulness of being, they may well enough wear the name of *Nothing*. Wherefore the first and Fountain-being, justly appropriates to himself the name, *I am*; yea, tells us, *He is, and there is none besides Him*, therein leaving no other name than that of *Nothing*, unto Creatures. And how much more may this be said of the material and mortal part, this outside of man, whatever of him is obnoxious to death and the grave; which alone (abstractly lookt on) is the subject of the *Psalmist*'s present consideration and discourse?

By how much any thing hath more of Matter, it hath the less of actual Essence. Matter being rather a capacity of being, than being it self, or a dark umbrage or shadow of it, actually nothing; but [αὐτοάν-

Plotin. En. 2. l. 6. ἀνυπόστατον (as are the expreſſions of a noble Philoſopher) a meer Semblance, or a Lye.

And it is the language not of Philoſophers only, but of the Holy Ghoſt concerning all the Nations of men, *that they are as nothing, leſs than nothing, and vanity.* What a ſcarcity then, and penury of beeing, muſt we ſuppoſe in each individual! eſpecially if we look alone upon the outer part, or rather the umbrage or ſhadow of the man?

Iſa. 40.

2. 2. The *inſtability* and fluidneſs of it. The viſible and corporal beeing of man hath nothing ſteady or conſiſtent in it. Conſider his exterior frame and compoſition, he is, no time, all himſelf at once. There is a continual defluence and acceſs of parts; ſo that ſome account, Each Climacterick of his age changes his whole Fabrick. Whence it would follow, that beſides his ſtatique individuating Principle (from which we are now to abſtract) nothing of him remains; He is another thing; The former man is vaniſhed and gone; while he is, he haſtens

haſtens away; and within a little is not. In reſpect of the duration, as well as the degree of his being, he is next to nothing. He opens his eye, and is not. Gone in the twinkling of an eye. There is nothing in him ſtable enough, to admit a fixed look. So it is with the whole ſcene of things in this material world. As was the true Maxime of an Ancient: All things flow, nothing ſtays; after the manner of a River. The ſame thing which the Apoſtle's words more elegantly expreſs: *The fashion of this world passeth away.* The ſcheme, the ſhew, the pageantry of it. He ſpeaks of it but as an appearance, as if he knew not whether to call it ſomething or nothing, it was ſo near to vaniſhing into nothing. And therefore he there requires, that the affections which mutual nearneſs in relation challenges, be as if they were not: That we rejoyce in reference to one another, (even moſt nearly related, as the occaſion and ſcope of his diſcourſe teach us to underſtand him) but as if we rejoyced not, and to weep as if we

Job 27.19

Herael.

1 Cor. 7.

wept

wept not. Which implies, the objects merit no more; and are themselves as if they were not. Whence therefore a continued course of intense passion were very incongruous towards so discontinuing things.

And the whole state of man being but a shew, the pomp and glittering of the greatest men, make the most splendid and conspicuous part of it: yet all this we find is not otherwise reckoned of, *than an image, a dream, a vision of the night; every man at his best state is altogether vanity,* Job 20. 7, 8, 9. *walketh in a vain shew, disquieteth himself in vain*, &c. Of all without exception 'tis pronounced *man is like* Psal. 73. 20. *to vanity, his days are as a shadow that* Psal. 39. 5, 6. *passeth away:* As *Ecclesiastes* often, of all sublunary things, *vanity of vanities*, &c.

2. But yet there is another notion of [*vain*], as it signifies *useless*, unprofitable, or to no purpose. And in this sense also, if we consider the universal mortality of mankind without respect to a future state; There were a specious ground for the expostulation, *Why hast thou made all men in vain?* Va-

Vanity in the former notion ſpeaks the emptineſs of a thing, abſolutely and in it ſelf conſidered; In this latter relatively, as it is referred to and meaſured by an end. That is, in this ſenſe, vain, which ſerves to no end, or to no worthy and valuable end; which amounts to the ſame. For in as much as all ends, except the laſt, are means alſo to a further end; if the end immediately aimed at be vain and worthleſs, that which is referred to it, as it is ſo referred, cannot but be alſo vain.

Whereupon now let us make trial what end we could in this caſe think man made for.

Which will beſt be done by taking ſome view

1. Of his nature.
2. Of the ends for which, upon that ſuppoſition, we muſt ſuppoſe him made.

I. Of the former (neglecting the ſtrictneſs of Philoſophical diſquiſition) no more is intended to be ſaid

ſaid than may comport with the deſign of a popular diſcourſe. And it ſhall ſuffice therefore, only to take notice of what is more obvious in the nature of man, and ſubſervient to the preſent purpoſe. And yet we are here to look further than the meer ſurface and outſide of man, which we only conſidered before; and to view his nature, as it is in it ſelf: and not as the ſuppoſition *of its having nothing but what is mortal belonging to it*, would make it: for as the exility (and almoſt nothingneſs) of man's being conſidered according to that ſuppoſition, did beſt ſerve to expreſs the vanity of it, in the former notion that hath been given of a *vain thing:* So the excellency, and ſolid ſubſtantiality of it, conſidered as it is in it ſelf, will conduce moſt to the diſcovery of its vanity in this latter notion thereof. That is, if we firſt conſider *that*, and then the ſuppoſition of ſuch a Creature's being only made to periſh. And if what ſhall be ſaid herein, do, in the ſequel, tend to deſtroy that above-mention'd ſuppoſition,

(as

(as it, being eſtabliſhed, would deſtroy the prime glory of Humane Nature) it can only be ſaid *magna eſt veritas*, &c. In the mean time we may take a view, in the nature of man,

1. Of his *Intellective Powers*; Hereby he frames notions of things, even of ſuch things as are above the ſphere of ſenſe; of moral good and evil, right and wrong, what is vertuous and what is vicious; of abſtract and univerſal natures. Yea, and of a firſt beeing, and cauſe, and of the wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and other perfections which muſt primarily agree to him. Hereby he affirms and denies one thing of another, as he obſerves them to agree and diſagree, and diſcerns the truth and falſhood of what is ſpoken or deny'd. He doth hereby infer one thing from another, and argue himſelf into firm and unwavering aſſent to many things, not only above the diſcovery of ſenſe, but directly contrary to their ſenſible appearances.

2. His power of *determining him-*

himself, of chusing and refusing, according as things are estimated, and do appear to him. Where also it is evident how far the objects which this faculty is sometimes exercised about, do transcend the reach of all sensible nature; as well as the peculiar nobleness and excellency is remarkable of the faculty it self.

It hath, often for its object, things of the highest nature, purely spiritual and divine; Vertue, Religion, God himself. So as that these (the faculty being repair'd only by sanctifying grace; not now first put into the nature of man) are chosen by some, and, where it is not so, refused ('tis true) by the most, but not by a meer not-willing of them (as meer brutal appetite also doth not-will them, which no way reaches the notion of a refusal) but by rejecting them, with a positive aversion, and dislike, wherein there is great iniquity and sin: which could not be but in a nature capable of the opposite temper.

And

And it is apparent this faculty hath the priviledg of determining it self; so as to be exempt from the necessitating influence of any thing forreign to it. Upon the supposal whereof, the managery of all humane affairs, all Treaties between man and man, to induce a consent to this or that; The whole frame of government, all Legislation and distribution of publick Justice do depend. For take away this supposition, and these will presently appear most absurd, and unjust. With what solemnity are applications and addresses made to the Will of man upon all occasions? How is it courted and solicited and sued unto? But how absurd were it so to treat the other Creatures, that act by a necessity of Nature in all they do? to make supplications to the Wind, or propound articles to a Brute? And how unjust, to determine and inflict severe penalties for unavoidable and necessitated actions and omissions?

These things occurr to our first notice, upon any (a more sudden and cursory) view of the nature of man.

And

And what ſhould hinder, but we may infer from theſe that there is further in his nature,

¶ 3. *A capacity of an immortal ſtate, i. e.* that his nature is ſuch, that he may, if God ſo pleaſe, by the concurrent influence of his ordinary power, and providence, without the help of a miracle, ſubſiſt in another ſtate of life, after this, even a ſtate that ſhall not be liable to that empairment and decay that we find this ſubject to. More, is not (as yet) contended for; and ſo much methinks, none ſhould make a difficulty to admit, from what is evidently found in him. For it may well be ſuppoſed that the admitting of this (at leaſt) will ſeem much more eaſie, to any free and unprejudic'd reaſon, than to aſcribe the operations before inſtanc'd in, to alterable or periſhable matter, or indeed to any matter at all. It being juſtly preſumed, that none will aſcribe to matter, as ſuch, the powers of ratiocination or volition. For then every particle of matter muſt needs be rational, and intelligent (an high advance

vance to what one would never have thought at all active). And how unconceivable is it, that the minute particles of matter, in themſelves, each of them deſtitute of any ſuch powers, ſhould by their mutual intercourſe with one another, become furniſht with them! That they ſhould be able to underſtand, deliberate, reſolve, and chuſe, being aſſembled and duly diſpoſed in counſel together; but, apart, reſt all in a deep and ſluggiſh ſilence! Beſides, if the particles of matter howſoever modifi'd, and moved, to the utmoſt ſubtilty or tenuity, and to the higheſt vigour, ſhall then become intelligent and rational, How is it that we obſerve not, as any matter is more ſubtil, and more ſwiftly and variouſly moved, it makes not a diſcernably nearer approach, (proportionably) to the faculty and power of reaſoning? And that nothing more of an aptitude or tendency towards intelligence and wiſdom, is to be perceived in an aſpiring Flame, or a briſk Wind, than in a clod or a ſtone? If to

understand, to define, to distinguish, to syllogize, be nothing else but the agitation and collision of the minute parts of rarified matter among one another; methinks some happy Chymist or other, when he hath mist his designed mark, should have hit upon some such more noble product; and, by one or other prosperous sublimation, have caused some temporary resemblance (at least) of these operations. Or, if the paths of Nature, in these affairs of the mind, be more abstruse, and quite out of the reach and road of artificial atchievement; Whence is it that Nature her self (that is vainly enough supposed by some to have been so happy, as by some casual stroaks to have fabricated the first of humane Creatures, that have since propagated themselves) is grown so effete and dull, as never since to hit upon any like effect in the like way. And that no Records of any time or age give us the notice of some such Creature sprung out of some *Epicurean* Womb of the

the Earth, and elaborated by the only immediate hand of Nature, so disposing the parts of matter in its constitution, that it should be able to perform the operations belonging to the mind of man.

But if we cannot with any tolerable pretence or shew of reason attribute these operations to any meer matter, that there must be somewhat else in man to which they may agree, that is distinct from his corruptible part; and that is therefore capable, by the advantage of its own nature of subsisting hereafter (while God shall continue to it an influence agreeable to its nature, as he doth to other Creatures).

And hence seems a modest and sober deduction, That there is in the nature of man, at least, a capacity of an immortal state.

Now if we yet suppose there is *actually* no such state for man hereafter: It is our next business to view the ends for which, upon that supposition, he may be thought to have been made. Whence

we shall soon see, there is not any of them whereof it may be said, This is that he was created for, as his *adequate* End.

And here we have a double Agent to be accommodated with a suitable End:

{Man now made. And
{God who made him.

1. *Man himself.* For it must be considered, that in as much as man is a Creature capable of propounding to himself an end, and of acting knowingly and with design towards it (and indeed uncapable of acting otherwise as a man): It would therefore not be reasonable to speak of him, in this discourse, as if he were meerly passive, and to be acted only by another. But we must reckon him obliged, in subordination to his Maker, to intend and pursue (himself) the proper end for which he appointed and made him. And in reason we are to expect, that what God hath appointed to be his

his proper end, ſhould be ſuch as is in it ſelf moſt highly deſirable, ſuitable to the utmoſt capacity of his nature, and attainable by his action, ſo carrying with it ſufficient inducements, both of deſire and hope, to a vigorous and rational proſecution of it. Thus we muſt, at leaſt, conceive it to have been in the primitive inſtitution of man's end (unto which the expoſtulation hath reference, *Wherefore haſt thou made all men in vain?*)

And we can think of no ends which men either do or ought to propound to themſelves, but by the direction of one of theſe principles, *Senſe*, *Reaſon*, or *Religion*.

1. *Senſe* is actually the great Dictator to the moſt of men, and *de facto*, determines them to the mark and ſcope which they purſue, and animates the whole purſuit. Not that ſenſe is by it ſelf capable of deſigning an end, but it too generally inclines and byaſſes Reaſon herein. So that Reaſon hath no other hand in the buſineſs, than 1.

only as a slave to Sense, to form the design and contrive the methods which may most conduce to it, for the gratification of sensual appetite and inclination at last.

And the appetitions of sense (wherein it hath so much mastery and dominion) are but such as we find enumerated 1 *John* 2. 16. *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life.* Or (if we understand the Apostle to use the name of lust objectively) the objects sufficiently connote the appetitions themselves. All which may fitly be refer'd to Sense, either the outward senses, or the fancy and imagination, which, as deservedly, comes under the same common denomination.

Now who can think the satisfying of these lusts the commensurate end of man? Who would not, upon the supposition of no higher, say with the *Psalmist*, *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* To what purpose was it for him to live in the world a few years, upon this account only, and so

ſo go down to the place of ſilence? What is there in the momentary titillations of man's wanton fleſh; in his pleaſing-view of a Maſs of Treaſure (which he never brought with him into the world, but only heaped together, and ſo leaves not the world richer or poorer than he found it)? What is there in the applauſe and admiration of fools (as the greater part always are); that we ſhould think it worth the while for man to have liv'd for theſe things? If the queſtion were put, Wherefore did God make man? Who would not be aſham'd ſo to anſwer it, He made him to eat and drink and take his pleaſure; to gather up wealth for he knows not who; to uſe his inventions that each one may become a talk and wonder to the reſt; and then when he hath fetcht a few turns upon the Theater, and entertained the eyes of beholders with a ſhort ſcene of impertinencies, deſcend, and never be heard of more? What? that he ſhould come into the

world furniſht with ſuch powers and endowments for this? It were a like caſe as if one ſhould be clad in ſcarlet to go to plough, or curiouſly inſtructed in arts and ſciences to tend Hogs.

Or, 2*dly*, if we riſe higher to the view of ſuch ends as more refined *Reaſon* may propoſe, within the compaſs only of this preſent ſtate; we will ſuppoſe that it be either,

The acquiſition of much knowledg, the furniſhing his underſtanding with ſtore of choice and well-digeſted notions; that he may pleaſe himſelf in being (or in having men think him) a learn'd Wight; Death robs away all his gain. And what is the world the better? How little ſhall he enrich the clods, among which he muſt ſhortly lye down, and have his abode! Or how little is the gain when the labour and travel of ſo many years is all vaniſhed and blown away with the laſt puff of his dying-breath? and the fruit that remains, is to have it ſaid by

by those that survive, *There lies learned dust?* That any part of his acquisitions in that kind descend to others, little betters the case, when they that succeed are all hastening down also into the same ignoble dust. Besides that the increase of sorrow, both because the objects of his knowledg, the more he knows, do multiply the more upon him, so as to beget a despair of ever knowing so much as he shall know himself to be ignorant of; And a thousand doubts, about things he hath more deeply considered, which his more confident (undiscovered) ignorance never dreamt of or suspected. And thence an unquietness and irresolution of mind, which they that never drove at any such mark are (more contentedly) unacquainted with. And also because, that by how much knowledg hath refin'd a man's soul, so much it is more sensible and perceptive of troublesome impressions from the disorderly state of things in the world; which they that con-

verſe only with earth and dirt, have not ſpirits clarified and fine enough to receive. So that except a man's knowing more than others, were to be referr'd to another ſtate, the labour of attaining thereto, and other acceſſory diſadvantages, would hardly ever be compenſated by the fruit or pleaſure of it. And unleſs a man would ſuppoſe himſelf made for torment, he would be ſhrewdly tempted to think a quiet and drowſie ignorance an happier ſtate.

Or if that a man's Reaſon, with a peculiarity of temper, guide him to an active, negotiating life, rather than that of contemplation; and determine him to the endeavour of ſerving mankind, or the community to which he belongs. By how much the worthier actions he performs, and by how much more he hath perfected and accompliſht himſelf with parts and promptitude for ſuch actions; The loſs and vanity is but the greater thereby, ſince he,

and

and those he affected to serve, are all going down to the silent grave. Of how little use are the Politician, the States-man, the Senator, the Judg, or the Eloquent man? If we lay aside the consideration of their subserviency to the keeping the world in a more composed and orderly state, for the prosecution of the great designs of Eternity, when, ere long, all their thoughts shall perish! What matter were it what became of the world, whether it be wise or foolish, rich or poor, quiet or unquiet, govern'd or ungovern'd? Whoever should make their order and tranquillity their study, or that should intend their thoughts and endeavours to the finding out the exactest methods and rules of government and policy, should but do as they that should use a great deal of pains and art in the curious adorning, and trimming up of a dying person. Or as if some one, among many condemned persons, should be very solicitous to have them march with him in

very

very exact order to the place of Execution. If the World be not looked upon as a 'tiring-room to dreſs one's ſelf in, for an appearance on the Eternal Stage; but only as a great Charnel-houſe, where they undreſs, and put off themſelves, to ſleep in everlaſting darkneſs; How can we think it worth a thought? or to be the ſubject of any rational deſign or care? Who would not rather bleſs himſelf in a (more rational) neglect, and regardleſneſs of all humane affairs? and account an unconcerned indifferency the higheſt wiſdom?

Yea, *3dly*, If we ſuppoſe *Religion* (which we need not (becauſe it is mentioned in this order) conceive excluſive of Reaſon, but rather perfective of it: Reaſon having firſt found out God, Religion adores Him) to become with any, the Ruling-principle, and to have the direction and government of the Man, as to his way and end; How would even that, languiſh with the beſt, were the conſide-

ration

ration of a future ſtate laid aſide, which, with ſo few, notwithſtanding it, hath any efficacy at all to command and govern their lives?

Religion terminates upon God: And upon him under a double notion; either as we deſign ſervice and honour to him; or as from him, we deſign ſatisfaction and bleſſedneſs to our ſelves.

Now if a man's thoughts, and the intention of his mind be carried towards God under the former notion; How great an allay and abatement muſt it needs be to the vigour and zeal of his affection, who ſhall with the moſt ſincere devotedneſs apply himſelf to ſerve His intereſt and glory, to reflect upon the univerſal mortality of himſelf and mankind, without any hope of compenſation to it by a future immortality?

It is agreed on all hands, that the utmoſt contributions of Creatures can add nothing to Him. And that our glorifying Him doth only conſiſt, either in our acknowledging

ledging Him glorious, our ſelves; or repreſenting him ſo to others.

But how little doth it ſignifie? and how flat and low a thing would it ſeem, that I ſhould only turn mine eye upwards, and think a few admiring-thoughts of God this hour, while I apprehend my ſelf liable to loſe my very thinking-power, and whole beeing the next! Or if we could ſpread His juſt renown, and gain all the ſons of men to a concurrence with us, in the adoring of His Soveraign Excellencies; how would it damp and ſtifle ſuch loyal and dutiful affection, to conſider, that the univerſal teſtimony, ſo deſervedly given Him, ſhall ſhortly ceaſe for ever! And that infinitely bleſſed Being, be ere long (again, as he was from Eternity before) the only Witneſs of his own glory!

And if the propenſion of a man's ſoul be towards God under the latter notion alſo, in order to a *ſatisfaction* that ſhall thence accrew to himſelf (which deſign, both

both in the purſuit and execution of it, is ſo conjunct with the former, that it cannot be ſever'd) It cannot but be an unſpeakable diminution and check to the higheſt delights in this kind, to think how ſoon they ſhall have an end. That the darkneſs and duſt of the grave ſhall ſhortly obſcure and extinguiſh the glory of this lightſome ſcene.

To think every time one enters that bleſſed Preſence, for ought I know, I ſhall approach it no more! This is poſſibly my laſt ſight of that pleaſant Face! my laſt taſt of thoſe enraviſhing pleaſures! What bitterneſs muſt this infuſe into the moſt delicious ſweetneſs our ſtate could then admit! And by how much more free and large Grace ſhould be in its preſent communications; and by how much any ſoul ſhould be more experienc't in the life of God, and inured to divine delights, ſo much the more grievous and afflictive reſentments it could not but have of the approaching

proaching end of all; And be the more powerfully tempted to say, Lord, why was I made in vain? How faint and languid would endeavours be after the knowledg of that God, whom I may but only know, and dye? How impotent and ineffectual would the attractions of this end be to man in his terrene state, to raise him above the world, and rescue him from the power of sensible things, to engage him in the pursuit of that sanctity and purity which alone can qualifie him for converse with God, to bear him out in a conflict against the (more natural) inclinations of sense; When if with much labour and painful striving, much self-denial, aud severity to the flesh, any disposition should be attained to relish divine pleasures; it be considered all the while, that the end of all may be as soon lost as it is gained. And that possibly there may be no more than a moments pleasure to recompence the pains and conflicts of many years; although, in this case, the continual

hope

hope and expectation of some farther manifestation and fruition, might much influence a person already holy, and a great lover of God, unto a stedfast adherence to him; yet how little would it do to make men such, that are yet unsuitable and disaffected to him? or even to recover such out of their lapses, and drowsie fits, that are not altogether so?

And it is further to be considered, that since God hath given man a beeing capable of subsisting in another state (as doth appear by what hath been already said): And since he is therefore capable of enioying a greater happiness than his present state can admit of; that capacity will draw upon him a most indispensable obligation to intend that happiness as his end. For admit that there be no future state for him, it is however impossible any man should know there is none; and upon an impartial view of the whole case, he hath enough to render it (at least) far more likely to him that there is. And cer-

certainly he cannot but be obliged to purſue the higheſt good (even by the Law of Nature it ſelf) which his nature is capable of; which probably he may attain, and which he is no where forbidden by his Creator to aſpire unto. Whence therefore, if we now circumſcribe him within the limits of this preſent mortal ſtate; or if, for argument's ſake, we ſuppoſe eventually there is no other; we muſt not only confeſs that capacity to be given him in vain, but that he is obliged alſo to employ the principal endeavours of his life, and all his powers in vain (for certainly his principal endeavour ought to be laid out in order to his principal end): That is, to purſue that good which he may attain, but never ſhall; and which is poſſible to him, but not upon any terms future.

And if it be admitted that the ſubject ſtate of man muſt ſilence all objections againſt any ſuch inconſiſtencies, and make him content to act in pure obedience to his

his Maker (whether he ſignifie his will by the Law of Nature only, or by any poſitive Precept) though he ſhall not hereafter enjoy any permanent ſtate of bleſſedneſs, as the conſequent reward; That vertue and goodneſs, an holy rectitude of inclinations and actions, are reward enough to themſelves. That there is that juſtice and ſweetneſs in Religion, to oblige him to love, and reverence, and adore the Divine Majeſty this moment, though he were ſure to periſh for ever, and be reduced to nothing the next. I ſay, admitting all this, yet

2. Since the *bleſſed God himſelf* is to be conſidered as the principal Agent and Deſigner in this enquiry [*Why haſt thou made all men in vain?*] It is with modeſt and humble reverence to be conſidered, what end worthy of that infinitely perfect Beeing, he may be ſuppoſed to have propounded to Himſelf, in forming ſuch a Creature of ſo improvable a nature, and furniſhed with ſo noble faculties 2.

ties and powers, for ſo tranſient and temporary a ſtate. And how well it will conſiſt with the moſt obvious and unqueſtionable notions we can have of an abſolutely perfect Being, and the Attributes which he moſt peculiarly challenges and appropriates to himſelf (ſo as not only to own, but to glory in them) that he ſhould give beeing not to ſome few only, but to the whole ſpecies of humane Creatures, and therein communicate to them a nature capable of knowing, of loving, and enjoying himſelf in a bleſſed eternity, with a deſign to continue them only for ſome ſhort ſpace on earth, in a low imperfect ſtate, wherein they ſhall be liable to ſink ſtill lower to the vileſt debaſement of their natures, And yet, not for their tranſgreſſion herein (for 'tis the mortality of man not by ſin, but by Creation, or the deſign of the Creator only, that is now ſuppoſed) but for his meer pleaſure to bereave them of being, and reduce them all again to nothing?

It

It is to be considered, whether thus to resolve and do, can any way agree to God, according to our cleareſt and moſt aſſured conceptions of him; not from our reaſoning only, but his diſcovery of himſelf. For, otherwiſe, we ſee, the imputation falls where we ſhould dread to let it reſt, of having *made man in vain.*

He is, in common account, ſaid to act vainly, who acts beneath himſelf, ſo as to purſue an end altogether unworthy of him, or none at all.

'Tis true, that ſome ſingle acts may be done by great Perſons, as a divertiſement, without diſhonourable reflection, that may ſeem much beneath them. And if any do ſtoop to very mean offices and employments to do good, to help the diſtreſſed, and relieve the miſerable, it is a glorious acqueſt; and the greater they are, the higher is the glory of their condeſcending goodneſs. Benignity of nature, and a propenſion to the moſt unexpected acts of a merciful ſelf-depreſſion, when

when the case may require it, are the most comely ornaments of Princely Greatness, and out-shine the glory of the richest Diadem. But a wonted habitual course of mean actions, in great persons, that speak a low design, or no design at all; but either an humour to trifle, or a mischievous nature and disposition, would never fail to be thought inglorious and infamous; as may be seen in the instances of *Sardanapalus*'s spinning, and *Domitian*'s killing of Flies.

When Wisdom and Goodness are in conjunction with Power and Greatness, they never perswade a descent but upon such terms, and for such purposes, that a more glorious advancement shall ensue. Wisdom foreseeing that end, and Goodness readily taking the way, which (though it were most undesigned, or not aimed at as an end) could not fail to effect it.

Nor are any Attributes of the Divine Being more conspicuous than these; more testified by Himself, or more generally acknowledged

ledged by all men that have not deny'd his exiſtence. Or if any have done that violence to their own minds, as to eraſe and blot out thence the belief of an exiſting Deity; yet, at leaſt, while they deny it, they cannot but have this notion of what they deny; and grant that theſe are great perfections, and muſt agree to God, upon ſuppoſition that He do exiſt. If therefore He ſhould do any thing repugnant to theſe, or we ſhould ſuppoſe Him to do ſo, we ſhould therein ſuppoſe Him to act below a God, and ſo, as were very unworthy of Him.

And though it becomes us to be very diffident of our own reaſonings, concerning the Counſels and Deſigns of that Eternal Being: ſo as if we ſhould find him to aſſert any thing expreſly of himſelf, which we know not how to reconcile with our own preconceived thoughts, therein to yeeld him the cauſe, and confeſs the debility of our underſtandings. Yet certainly it were great raſhneſs, and void of

all

all pretence, to ſuppoſe any thing, which neither he ſaith of himſelf, nor we know how, conſiſtently, to think.

Nor are we, in judging of his deſigns, to bring him down to our model, or meaſure him by man, whoſe deſigns do for the moſt part beſpeak only his own indigency, and are levelled at his own advantage, and the bettering ſome way or other of his preſent condition. Whatſoever the great God doth towards his Creatures, we muſt underſtand him to do, though with deſign, yet from an exuberant fulneſs of life and beeing, by which he is uncapable of an acceſſion to himſelf. And hence that he can, in reference to himſelf, have no other inducement to ſuch action, beſides the complacency which he takes in diffuſing his free communications, (for he *exerciſes loving-kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth, becauſe he delights in theſe things*); and the maintaining the juſt honour and reputation of his government over his Creatures,

Jer. 9.24.

tures, who as they are of him, and through him, must be all to him, that he may have glory for ever. Rom. 11. 36.

Now though it be most undoubtedly true, that the Soveraignty of his power, and dominion over his Creatures (of which he hath no need, and to whom he so freely gave being) is so absolute and unlimited, that, if we consider that only, we must acknowledg he might create a Man or an Angel, and annihilate him presently: yea, that he might, if he so pleased, raise up many Thousand Worlds of intelligent and innocent Creatures into being in one moment, and throw them into nothing again the very next moment.

Yet how unwarrantably should we maim the notion of God, if we should conceive of him only, according to one Attribute, secluding the consideration of the rest! How mishapen an Idea should we bear of him in our

minds! And how would it deform the face of Providence, and spoil the Decorum of his Administrations, if they should be the effects of one single Attribute only, the other having no influence on the affairs of the world! If nothing but *Mercy* should appear in his dispensations towards sinful man, so that every man might do what were good in his own eyes, without cause of fear to be called to account; If the most dissolute and prophane were equally assured of his favour, with those who are most holy, and strictly regular in all their conversation; what would be thought of God and Religion? Or how should we favour the notion of an impure Deity taking pleasure to indulge the wickedness of men? And if *Justice* alone have the whole management of Affairs, and every act of sin be followed with an act of sudden vengeance, and the whole world become a flaming-Theater, and all men held in an hope-

hopeleſs expectation of fiery indignation, and of judgment without mercy; What would become of that amiable Repreſentation, and the conſolatory thoughts we have of God, and of that love and duty which ſome ſouls do bear towards him? Or if *Power* ſhould affect daily to ſhew it ſelf in univerſal appearances and effects, in changing every hour the ſhapes of the Terreſtrial Creatures, in perpetual quick innovations of the courſes of the Celeſtial, with a thouſand more kinds of prodigious events that might be the hourly effects of unlimited power; How were the order of the World diſturb'd, and how unlovely an Idea would it beget in every intelligent Creature, of him that made and rules it? Yet is it from no defect of Mercy, that all men are not equally favoured and bleſſed of God; nor of Juſtice, that a ſpeedy vengeance is not taken on all; nor of Power, that the World is

not filled with aſtoniſhing wonders every day; but rather from their unexceſſiveneſs; and that they make that bleſſed temperature where they reſide, and are exerciſed in ſo exact proportion, that nothing is ever done unworthy of Him who is, at once, both perfectly Merciful, and Juſt, and Powerful, and Wiſe, and hath all Perfections eminently comprehended and united in His own moſt ſimple Being.

It were therefore beſides the purpoſe to inſiſt only what Soveraign Power, conſidered apart, might do; but we are to conſider what may be congruous to Him to do, who is infinitely Wiſe and Good, as well as Powerful.

1. And firſt, let it be weighed, how it may ſquare with this Divine Wiſdom to give being to a World of reaſonable Creatures, and giving them only a ſhort time of abode in being, to abandon them to a perpetual annihilation.

Wiſdom

Wisdom in any Agent must needs suppose the intention of some valuable End of his action. And the Divine Wisdom wherein it hath any End divers from that which his pure Goodness and Benignity towards his Creatures would incline him to (which also we must conceive it most intent to promote and further) cannot but have it chiefly in design; it being determined that his goodness should open it self, and break forth into a Creation, and that of reasonable Creatures, so to manage his government over these (which indeed are the only subjects of government in the strict and proper notion of it) as may most preserve his authority, and keep up his just interest in them, both by recommending him to their fear, and love; to possess them with that due and necessary reverence of him, that may restrain them from contemptuous sinning; and so endear his government to them, as to engage

them to a placid and free obedience.

But how little would it agree with this design of the Divine Wisdom, to have made man only for this temporary state?

For,

1. How little would it tend to the begetting and setling that fear of God in the hearts of men, that were necessary to preserve his authority and government from a prophane contempt; whereas daily experience shews, that there's now no difference made between them that fear God, and them that fear him not, unless wherein the former are worse dealt with, and more exposed to sufferings and wrongs; That at least 'tis often (yea for the most part) so, that to depart from iniquity is to make one's self a prey; that those who profess and evidence the most entire devotedness to God, and pay the greatest observance and duty to him, become a common scorn upon this very

very account; and are in continual danger to be eaten up as bread, by those that call not upon God, while, in the mean time, the Tabernacles of Robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure, are not plagued as other men, nor in trouble as other men. And judgment is not here executed for wicked works in this world: If also nothing is to be expected (either of good or evil) in another, who is likely to be induced (in this case) to fear God, or be subject to him? And how unlike is this to the wisdom of the Supream Ruler, to expose his most Rightful and Soveraign Authority, to the fearless and insolent affronts of his own revolted Creatures, without any design of future reparation to it! as if he had created them on purpose only to curse him, and dye! But he hath prevented the occasion of so reproachful a Censure, and thought fit to fill his Word and the Consciences of guilty sinners with

threats and dreadful preſages of a future judgment, and ſtate of puniſhment. To which he is no leſs concern'd, both in point of wiſdom and veracity (and I may add, of Legal Juſtice) to make the event correſpond, that he may neither be found to have omitted any due courſe, for prevention or redreſs of ſo great an evil; and that, if the threatning do not effectually over-awe ſinners, the execution may, at leaſt, right himſelf: And that, in the mean time, he do not (that which would leaſt of all become him, and which were moſt repugnant to his nature) make uſe of a ſolemn fiction to keep the world in order, and maintain his government by falſhood and deceit, that is, by threatning what he knows ſhall never be.

2. Nor were there (in the caſe all along ſuppoſed) a more probable proviſion made, to conciliate and procure to the Divine Majeſty the love which it is requiſite he ſhould have from the children of men. And

And this cannot but be thought another apt method for his wisdom to pitch upon, to render his government acceptable, and to engage men to that free and complacential subjection which is suitable to a God. For how can that filial and dutiful affection ever be the genuine product or impress of such a representation of the case between God and them; that is, that they shall be most indispensably obliged to devote their whole being, and all their powers, entirely to his Service and Interest; exactly to observe his strictest Laws, to keep under the severest restraint their most innate reluctant inclinations; and in the mean time expect the administrations of Providence to be such, towards them, that they shall find harder usage all their days, than his most insolent and irreconcilable Enemies, and at last lose their very Beings they know not how soon; and therewith (necessarily) all possibilities of any future recom-

pence. Is this a likely way to procure love, and to captivate hearts into an affectionate and free obedience? Or what is it probable to produce, but a sowr and sullen despondency, the extinction of all generous affection, and a temper more agreeable to a forc'd enthralment to some malignant insulting Genius, than a willing subjection to the God of all Grace and Love?

And every one will be ready to say, There is little of wisdom in that Government, the administration whereof is neither apt to beget fear or love in those that are subject to it: but either through the want of the one to be despised, or to be regretted through the want of the other.

And this being the very case, upon supposition of no future state; It seems altogether unworthy of the Divine Wisdom, that such a Creature should ever have been made, as Man, upon which no end is attainable (as the course of Pro-

Providence commonly runs in this world) in comparison whereof, it were not better, and more honourable to his Maker, (whose interest it is the part of his wisdom to consult) that he had never been. And therefore as to God, and the just and worthy designs of his glory, he would seem upon this supposition wholly *made in vain.*

2. And Secondly, How congruous and agreeable would this supposition prove to the Goodness of God? As that other Attribute of Wisdom doth more especially respect His own interest; so doth this, the interest of his Creatures: That is, if it be understood, not in a Metaphysical, but in a Moral sense, as it imports a propensity and steddy bent of will unto benefaction, according to that of the *Psalmist*, *Thou art good, and dost good.* Psal. 119. 68.

And this free and generous Principle it is, which gives the first rise and beginning to all the designs any way respecting the well-being,

being and happineſs of Creatures, which, then, infinite wiſdom forms and manages to their full iſſues and accompliſhment, guiding (as it were) the hand of Almighty Power in the execution of them.

That there ſhould be a Creation, we may conceive to be the firſt Dictate of this Immenſe Goodneſs, which afterwards diffuſes it ſelf through the whole, in communications agreeable to the nature of every Creature. So that even this inferior, and leſs noble part, the Earth, is *full of the goodneſs of the Lord.*

Pſal. 33. 5

It creates firſt its own object, and then pours forth it ſelf upon it with infinite delight, rewarding the expence with the pleaſure of doing good.

Now if we ſhould ſuppoſe ſuch a Creature as Man made only for that ſhort time and low ſtate, which we ſee to be allotted him in this world; It were neither difficult, nor enough, to reconcile the *Hypotheſis* with ſtrict Juſtice, which

which upon the ground of abſolute dominion, may do what it will with its own: But the ill accord it ſeems to have with ſo large and abounding Goodneſs, renders it very unlike the Diſpenſation of the bleſſed God. No enjoyment being in that caſe afforded to this ſort of Creatures, agreeable to their common nature and capacity, either in *degree* or *continuance*.

Not in *degree*: for who ſees not that the nature of man is capable of greater things than he here enjoys? and where that capacity is reſcued from the corruption that narrows and debaſes it, how ſenſibly do holy ſouls reſent and bewail their preſent ſtate, as a ſtate of imperfection! With how fervent and vehement deſires and groans do they aſpire and pant after an higher and more perfect! *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed* (that is not enough, to be delivered 2 Cor. 5. 4.

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out of the miſeries of life, by laying down this paſſive part, is not that which will terminate their deſires) *but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.*

Theirs are not brutal groans, the complaint of oppreſt ſenſitive nature under a preſent evil; but rational and ſpiritual, the expreſſions of deſire ſtrongly carri'd to purſue an apprehended ſuitable good.

The trueſt notion we can yet have of the primitive nature and capacity of man, is by beholding it in its gradual reſtitution. And is it agreeable to the goodneſs of God to put ſuch a nature into any, and with-hold the ſuitable object? As if it were a pleaſure to him to behold the work of his own hands ſpending it ſelf in weary ſtruglings towards him, and vext all the while it continues in being, with the deſire of what it ſhall never enjoy? and which he hath made it deſire, and therein

therein encouraged it to expect?

Nor in *continuance*: For I ſuppoſe it already evident, that the nature of man is capable (in reſpect of his principal part) of perpetuity, and ſo of enjoying a felicity hereafter, that ſhall be permanent and know no end. And it ſeems no way congruous to ſo large Goodneſs, to ſtifle a capacity whereof it was it ſelf the Author, and deſtroy its own work.

For if the Being of man is intended for ſo ſhort a continuance, either he may have the knowledg of this determination concerning him, or not: If he cannot have the knowledg of it, why ſhould any one ſay what they cannot know; or put ſuch a thing upon God, that is ſo vilely reflecting, and diſhonourable to him? If he may have the knowledg of it, then doth he ſeem a Creature made for torment, while, by an eaſie reflection upon himſelf, he may diſcern he is not uncapable of a perpetual ſtate; and is yet brought

brought forth into the light, to be, ere long, extinguish't, and shut up in everlasting darkness. And who can think this a thing worthy of infinite and eternal Goodness? Besides (as hath been insisted before) that this torture, proceeding from so sad an expectation, cannot but be most grievous and afflictive to the best. Whence the Apostle tells us, that Christians, *if in this life only they had*
1 Cor. 15. *hope, were of all men most miserable.*
19. So that it were more desirable never to have been. If any yet, fall hereafter into a state to which they would prefer perpetual annihilation, in as much as it is wholly by their own default, it no way reflects upon Divine Goodness. But it would be a dishonourable reflection rather upon that Author and Fountain of all Goodness, if he should not express himself wise and just as well as good; as it would upon a man, especially a Ruler over others, if that which we call good nature were conjunct with stolidity,

dity, or an insensibleness of whatsoever affronts to his Person and Government.

Upon the whole, therefore, it seems most repugnant to these great Attributes of the Divine Being, to have made man only for this present state. That to think so, were to conceive unworthily of him, as if he had acted much beneath himself, and done a vain thing in making such a Creature, no end being attainable by it, which we can suppose either his Wisdom or Goodness to aim at.

If any would imagine to themselves an expedient, by supposing an eternal succession of humane generations, upon whom the Wisdom and Goodness of God might have a perpetual exercise in the government and sustentation of them for their appointed times: This would be far from satisfying, as to either; but would rather encrease the difficulty. For there would be the same temptation upon all the Individuals, to con-

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temn or regret the Government of their Maker.

So that he ſhould hereby even eternize his own reproach; and ſhould always, in every ſucceſſion, have ſtill the ſame craving appetites returning, and expectations never to be ſatisfied; which were as repugnant to all he hath diſcovered to us of his nature, as any thing we can ſuppoſe.

Though ſome perſons of a light and *diſultory* humour, might imagine to themſelves a pleaſure in it, if they had the power to make ſuch a rotation of things, riſing and falling, coming and paſſing away, at their beck and command; and ſuch as were of a *Sanguinary* Temper, might ſport themſelves in raiſing up and lopping off lives at pleaſure with an arbitrary hand. Yet ſure they would never gain by it the eſteem of being either wiſe or good; and would 'tis like, in time, grow weary of the ſport. But to form to our ſelves ſuch Idea's of the bleſſed

bleſſed God, were an injury not inferior to the very denial of his being.

His providence towards the inferior Creatures, hath no reſemblance of any ſuch thing; whom his bounty ſuſtains agreeably to their natures, who have no foreſight of their own ceſſation from being, to keep them in a continual death by the expectation of it. And who ſerve to valuable and reaſonable purpoſes, while they are continued; for they are uſeful, partly to the ſuſtentation of man, and partly to his inſtruction, in order to his higher Ends.

And though each individual of them do not actually ſo, it is ſufficient that the ſeveral kinds of them are naturally apt thereto, which are propagated according to a ſetled courſe and Law of Nature in their individuals. And if all immediately ſerve not man, yet they do it mediately in ſerving thoſe that more immediately do. Beſides that when ſuch a work

work was to be done, as the furniſhing out, and accompliſhing this lower world; It was meet all things ſhould be in number, weight and meaſure, and correſpond in every part. As if one build a Houſe for entertainment, though the more noble Rooms only do come in view, yet all the reſt are made anſwerably decent, on ſuppoſition that they may. It was becoming the auguſt and great Lord of this world, that it have in it, not only what may ſuſtain the indigent, but gratifie the contemplative, by freſh variety; who would be apt to grow remiſs by converſing only with what were of every days obſervation. Nor was that a low end, when ſuch contemplation hath ſo direct a tendency to raiſe a conſidering mind to the ſight, and love, and praiſe of the Supream Being, that hath ſtampt ſo lively ſignatures and prints of his own perfection upon all his works.

If it be ſaid, Man might be in the

the ſame kind ſerviceable to the contemplation of Angels, though he were himſelf never to know any other than this mortal ſtate. 'Tis true, that he might ſo; but yet the incongruities were no way ſalved, of God's putting a capacity and expectation into his nature of a better ſtate. Of his dealing ſo hardly with them, that he hath procured to love him. Of his never vindicating their high contempt, that ſpent their days in rebellion againſt him.

Beſides, that theſe were ill precedents, and no pleaſant Theams for the view of an Angelical mind. And if they ſee a nature extinct, capable of their ſtate, what might they ſuſpect of their own?

So that which way ſoever we turn our thoughts, we ſtill ſee that man's mortality, and liableneſs to an unavoidable death, abſtracted from the thoughts of another ſtate, carry that conſtant aſpect, as if *all men were made in vain.*

What

What remains then, but that we conclude hence, we ought not too much, or too long, thus to abſtract, nor too cloſely confine our eye to this dark and gloomy Theam, Death, and the Grave, or with-hold it from looking further. For far be it from us to think the wiſe and holy God hath given being to man (and conſequently exerciſed a long continued ſeries of Providence thorough ſo many ſucceſſive Ages towards him) *in vain.*

Nothing but a proſpect of another ſtate can ſolve the knot, and work through the preſent difficulty, can give us a true account of man, and what he was made for.

Therefore ſince it would be prophane and impious, ſad and uncomfortable, a blaſphemy to our Maker, and a torture to our ſelves, to ſpeak it as our ſetled apprehenſion and judgment, That God had made man to no purpurpoſe: We are obliged and concerned,

cerned, both in juſtice to Him, and compaſſion to our ſelves, ſo to repreſent the caſe, as that we may be able to remove ſo unworthy and black a thought to the greateſt diſtance from us, both in it ſelf, and whatſoever practiſe would be conſequent thereto. That is, to conclude, That certainly there muſt be another ſtate after this; and accordingly ſteer our courſe.

The Improvement then of the foregoing Diſcourſe, will have a double aſpect;

On our { *Judgments.* / *Practice.*

1. On our *Judgments*, To ſettle this great Principle of Truth in them, *The certain futurity of another ſtate, after this life is over.* Unto which this preſent ſtate is only preparatory and introductive.

For whereas we can never give a rational

rational account why such a Creature as man was made, if we confine all our apprehensions concerning him to his present state on earth: Let them once transcend those narrow limits, flye over into eternity, and behold him made for an everlasting state hereafter; and the difficulty now vanishes, the whole affair looks with a comely and befitting aspect.

For we may now represent the case thus to our selves. That man was put into this terrestrial state and dwelling, by the wise and righteous designation of his great Creator and Lord, that his Loyalty to him amidst the temptations and enticements of sensible things, might be tried a while: That revolting from Him, he is only left to feel here the just smart of his causeless defection. That yet such farther methods are used for his recovery, as are most suitable to his so empaired state. An allayed light shines to him in the midst of darkness, that his

his feebler eye may receive a gradual illumination, and behold God in thoſe more obſcure diſcoveries which he now vouchſafes of himſelf, till by degrees he be won to take up good thoughts of him, and return into an acquaintance and friendſhip with him; which once begun here, ſhall be hereafter perfected in eternal fruitions. The offence and wrong done to his Maker, he in a ſtrange unthought-of way makes compenſation of to himſelf. And teſtifies his reconcileableneſs, and perſwades a reconciliation upon ſuch terms, and by ſo endearing Mediums as might melt and mollifie hearts of Adamant; and ſhall effectually prevail with many to yeild themſelves the Subjects and Inſtances of his admired goodneſs for ever; while others lye only under the natural conſequents and juſt reſentments of their unremedied enmity and folly. So are the glorious iſſues of God's diſpenſation towards man, and the wiſe

and merciful conduct of his equal Government, worthily celebrated through the days of Eternity with just acclamations and praises. We can fasten upon nothing exceptionable or unaccountable, yea, or that is not highly laudable and praise-worthy in this course of procedure.

Therefore, though now we behold a dark Cloud of Mortality hanging over the whole Humane Race; Though we see the grave still devouring, and still unsatisfied, and that all are successively drawn down into it; and we puzzle our selves to assign a reason why such a Creature was made a reasonable Being, capable of an everlasting duration, to visit the world only, and vanish; to converse a short space with objects and affairs so far beneath it, and retire we know not whither. If yet our eye follow him through the darker paths of the Region of Death, till at the next appearance we behold him cloathed with immortality,

mortality, and fitted to an endleſs ſtate, the wonder is over, and our amuſement quickly ceaſes.

Wherefore let us thus bethink our ſelves, and conſider: Surely he that made this great Univerſe, and diſpos'd all the ſorts, ſtations, and motions of Creatures in it, in ſo exquiſite order and method, cannot but be a moſt perfectly wiſe and intellectual Agent, and therefore cannot be ſuppoſed to have done any thing to no purpoſe; much leſs when all the inferior Creatures have Ends viſibly anſwering the exigency of their natures, to have made ſo excellent a Creature as Man (the nobler part of his lower Creation) in vain; that He only ſhould be without his proportionable end, and after a ſhort continuance in being, return to nothing, without leaving it conjecturable what he was made for. This were ſo intolerable an incongruity, and ſo unlike the ſootſteps that every where elſe appear of the Divine

wisdom and goodness, that we cannot but enquire further into this matter, and conclude at last, That he was made for some higher purposes than are within the reach of our sight; and hath his principal part yet to act upon another stage, within the vail, that shall never be taken down.

The future immortality of man seems, therefore, so certainly grounded upon what is discovered and generally acknowledged touching the nature of God, and his most peculiar and essential Perfections, that unless we were further put to prove the existence of a God (which to them that are rational need not, and to them that are not, were in vain) there can no reasonable doubt remain concerning it.

2. 2. Wherefore the further use we have to make of the matter proposed, is in reference to our *Practice:* Which it may fitly serve both to correct and reprove, and

and also to direct and guide.

1. It administers the ground of *just rebuke*, that since if we terminate our thoughts and designs upon things, only on this side the grave, it would seem we were wholly made in vain, we do yet so generally employ our cares and endeavours about such things, and even the vilest and most despicable of these: And so live, not to our own dishonour only, but to the reproach of our Maker, as if he made us for no more worthy Ends. And let us but impartially debate the matter with our selves: Can we, in sober reason, think we were made only for such Ends as the most only pursue? Have we any pretence to think so? Or can it enter into our souls to believe it? Would not men be ashamed to profess such a belief? Or to have it written in their foreheads, These are the only ends they are capable of? Then might one read, Such a man born to put others in mind of his Predecessor's

Name; and only left such a Family should want an Heir; Such a one to consume such an Estate, and devour the Provenue of so many Farms and Manors. Such a one to fill so many Bags and Coffers, to sustain the riot of him that succeeds. Some created to see, and make sport; to run after Hawks and Dogs, or spend the time which their weariness redeems from converse with Brutes, in making themselves such, by drinking away the little residue of Wit and Reason they have left; mixing with this gentile exercise, their impure and scurrilous Drolleries, that they may befriend one another with the kind occasion of proving themselves to be yet of Humane Race, by this only demonstration remaining to them, that they can laugh. Which medium, if the wisdom of the jest were known, would be found so pregnant, as to afford them a double conclusion; and be as effectual oftentimes, to prove them Fools

as Men. Others one might read born to trouble the world, to disquiet the neighbourhood, and be the common plague of all about them, at least, if they have any within their reach and power, that are wiser and more sober than themselves; or that value not their souls at so cheap a rate as they. Others made to blaspheme their Maker, to rent the Sacred Name of God, and make proof of their high valour, and the gallantry of their brave spirits, by bidding a defiance to Heaven, and proclaiming their Heroick contempt of the Deity, and of all Religion. As if they had perswaded themselves into an opinion, That because they have had so prosperous success in the high atchievements of conquering their humanity, and baffling their own Fear, and Reason, and Conscience, Death also will yeild them as easie a victory, or be afraid to encounter men of so redoubled courage; that the God of Heaven, rather than of-

fend them, will not ſtick to repeal his Laws for their ſakes, or never exact the obſervance of them from perſons of their quality; that they ſhall never be called to judgment; or be complemented only there, with great reſpect, as perſons that bore much ſway in their Countrey, and could number ſo many Hundreds or Thouſands a year; that, at leaſt, the infernal flames will never preſume to touch ſo worthy Perſonages; that Devils will be awed by their Greatneſs, and fear to ſeize them, leſt they ſhould take it for an affront. No conceit can be imputed to theſe men abſurd enough to over-match the abſurdity of their practice. They can themſelves think nothing more groſs and ſhameful, than what they daily are not aſhamed to act. For what abſurdity can be compaſſed in a thought, greater than what appears in a courſe of life managed in perpetual hoſtility to all Principles of Reaſon and Humanity?

manity? And either they must own all the impious folly of such thoughts; or confess, upon other accounts, an equal infatuation in their thinking-faculty it self. For either they think their course justifiable, or they do not. If they do, how fatally are all things inverted in their depraved minds? Wisdom and Folly, Vertue and Vice, Good and Evil, seem to them transform'd into one another, and are no longer to be known by their Names. The common notions of all mankind are but blind fancies in comparison of their later and clearer illumination. And the ancient religious sentiments of all former ages, dreams and follies to their admired new light. Their wise and rare discoveries, That they and all things came by chance; That this world hath no Owner or Lord (because they never had wit or patience to consider the non-sense of them; and though they never any of them, had the luck to see one

clod of earth or grain of sand start up into being out of nothing; much less ground to think, that such a World should of it self do so) are reason enough with them to mock at the Eternal Being, and attempt to jeer Religion out of the world, and all other men out of their reason and wits, as they have themselves. And sure this must be their only pretence; and their Atheism the best reason, upon which to justifie their constant practice. For who can think, (while he sees them not yet in chains) they should be so perfectly mad, as to acknowledg only such a Deity (the Author and Ruler of all things) whose favour were worth nothing? or to be procured by affronts? to whom contempt were a sacrifice? and the violation of whatsoever is Sacred, the most effectual propitiation? or acknowledg him for a God whom they hope to overpower, and to prosper in a War against him?

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And if they acknowledg none at all, and this be the fundamental Article of their Creed, That there is indeed none; Then can no man charge them with any thought more grosly foolish than their own, nor can they devise to say any thing, by which more certainly to argue themselves bereft of the common understanding of men. For who that is not so, if he only take notice of his own being, may not as certainly conclude the existence of a God, as that two and two make four? Or what imagination can be too absurd to have place in that mind that can imagine this Creation to be a casualty? He would be thought besides himself that should say the same of the composition of a Clock, or a Watch, though it were a thousand times more supposable. But if they do not justifie themselves, to what purpose is it further to press them with absurdities, that persist in constant self-contradiction? or that have not so much left them of rational

tional ſenſation, as to feel in their own minds the preſſure of the very greateſt abſurdity?

If they only preſume they do well, becauſe they have never askt themſelves the queſtion, or ſpent any thoughts about it; this ſpeaks as much a beſotted mind, as any of the reſt; and is as unworthy of a reaſonable Creature. Why have they the power of thinking? Or who do in any caſe more generally incurr the cenſure of imprudence and folly, than they who have only this plea for their actions, That they did not conſider? Eſpecially when the caſe is ſo plain, and the moſt ſudden reflection would diſcover the iniquity and danger of their courſe.

And one would think nothing ſhould be more obvious, or more readily occurr to the mind of a man, than to contemplate himſelf, and taking notice there is ſuch a Creature in the world, furniſhed with ſuch abilities and powers, to conſider, What was I made

made for? What am I to pitch upon as my proper End? Nor any thing appear more horrid to him, than to croſs the very Ends of his Creation.

2. It may alſo be improv'd to the *directing of our Practice.* For which purpoſe we may hence take this general Rule, *That it be ſuch as becomes the expectation of a future ſtate.* For what elſe is left us, ſince in our preſent ſtate we behold nothing but vanity?

We ſee thus ſtands our caſe, that we muſt meaſure our ſelves by one of theſe apprehenſions; Either [*we are made in vain*]; or [*we are made for a future ſtate*]. And can we endure to live according to the former? As if we were impertinencies in the Creation, and had no proper buſineſs in it? What ingenuous perſons would not bluſh to be always in the poſture of an uſeleſs hang-by? to be ſtill hanging on, where he hath nothing to do? that if he be asked, Sir, what's your buſineſs here? he hath nothing to ſay?

Or

Or how can we bear it, to live as if we came into the world by chance? or rather by miſtake? As though our Creation had been a miſadventure, a thing that would not have been done, had it been better thought on? And that our Maker had overſhot himſelf, and been guilty of an overſight, in giving us ſuch a being? Who that hath either juſt value for himſelf, or any reverence for his Maker, could endure either to undergo the reproach, or be guilty of the blaſphemy which this would import? And who can acquit himſelf of the one or the other, that lives not in ſome meaſure agreeably to the expectation of ſomewhat beyond this preſent life? Let us therefore gird up the loins of our minds, and ſet our faces as perſons deſigning for another world; ſo ſhaping our courſe, that all things may concur to ſignifie to men the greatneſs of our expectations. We otherwiſe proclaim to the world (to our

own

own and our Creator's wrong) that we have reasonable souls given us to no purpose. We are therefore concern'd and obliged both to aim at that worthy End, and to discover and make it visible that we do so.

Nor is a design for an immortal state so mean and inglorious, or so irrational and void of a solid ground, that we have any cause either to decline or conceal it; either not to retain, or to be ashamed of our hope.

Nor is there any thing to be done in prosecution of it, so unworthy as to need a corner, or merit to be done as a work of darkness.

Neither yet is it a vain-glorious ostentation, or the affectation of making shew of an excellency above the vulgar pitch that I perswade to: But a modest sober avowing of our high design and hope; neither making any near approach to a proud arrogance on the one hand; nor a mean pusillanimity

lanimity on the other. Truly great and generous ſpirits know how to carry under Secular Honour with that prudent and graceful *decorum* as ſhall ſignifie a juſt owning of themſelves without inſolence towards others. Real worth though it do not vaunt, will ſhew it ſelf; and while it doth not glare, yet cannot forbear to ſhine.

We ſhould endeavour the excellency of a ſpirit refin'd from earth and droſs, and aſpiring towards a ſtate of immortality, may *expreſs it ſelf*, and ſhine in its *native luſtre*; with its *own*, not with borrowed beams; with a conſtant, even, natural, not with an unequal artificial light. That all that will, may ſee, by the ſteddy tendency of our courſe, that we are aiming at the great things of another world. Though we, all the while, are not ſo much ſolicitous to have our end and purpoſe known, as to obtain it.

And verily, ſince the vile ſons of

of the earth, the men of ſenſe, that aim at no other end than to gratifie their brutal appetite with ſuch pleaſure as is only to be compaſs'd within a ſhort lifes-time in this world; and who live to the reproach of their Maker, and of mankind, do not go about to hide the infamy of their low deſign, or conceal the degenerous baſeneſs of their mean ſpirits; but while they make their belly their God, and only mind earthly things, do alſo glory in their ſhame: How much were it beneath the ſtate and ſpirit of the ſons of God, that are worthily deſigning for a glorious immortality, to be aſhamed of their glory? or think of ſtealing a paſſage to Heaven in the dark?

No; let them know, it is not only too mean a thing for them to involve themſelves in the common ſpirit of the ſenſual world, but even to ſeem to do ſo. And that this is ſo foul and ignominious a thing, as whereof they are concern'd, not to be free from the guilt

guilt only, but the ſuſpition.

Heb. 11. Thoſe worthy ſouls that in former (and darker) days were engaged in ſeeking the Heavenly Countrey, thought it became them to confeſs themſelves *pilgrims and ſtrangers on the earth:* And therein, to declare plainly, that they were ſeeking that better Countrey. Which confeſſion and plain declaration, we need not underſtand to be meerly verbal, but practical and real alſo, ſuch as might be underſtood to be the language of their lives, and of a conſtant uniform courſe of actions, agreeable to ſuch a deſign.

Let us therefore bethink our ſelves, what temper of mind, and manner of life may be moſt conformable to this deſign, and beſt become perſons pretending to it: Whereupon we ſhould ſoon find our own thoughts inſtructing us, that ſuch things as theſe would be moſt becoming, and fit, in reference thereto; and which,

we

we may therefore take as ſo many particular directions how to govern our ſpirits, and behave our ſelves anſwerably to ſo great an expectation.

1. That we endeavour for a calm indifferency and diſpaſſionate temper of mind towards the various objects and affairs that belong to this preſent life. There are very narrow limits already ſet, by the nature of the things themſelves, to all the real objective value that ſuch things have in them: And it is the part of wiſdom and juſtice to ſet the proportionable bounds to all the thoughts, cares, and paſſions, we will ſuffer to ſtir in our minds in reference to them. Nothing is a more evident acknowledged Character of a Fool, than upon every ſlight occaſion to be in a tranſport. To be much taken with empty things, betokens an empty ſpirit. It is a part of manly fortitude to have a ſoul ſo fenc't againſt forreign impreſſions, as little to be mov'd with things that have

havelittle in them. To keep our paſſions under a ſtrict rein, and ſteddy command, that they be eaſily retractable, and taught to obey. Not to move till ſevere Reaſon have audited the matter, and pronounc't the occaſion juſt and valuable. In which caſe the ſame manly temper will not refuſe to admit a proportionable ſtamp and impreſs from the occurring object: For it is equally a prevarication from true Manhood, to be mov'd with every thing, and with nothing. The former would ſpeak a man's ſpirit a feather, the latter a ſtone. A total apathie and inſenſibleneſs of external occurrents, hath been the aim of ſome, but never the attainment of the higheſt pretenders. And if it had, yet ought it not to have been their boaſt; as upon ſober thoughts it cannot be reckoned a perfection. But it ſhould be endeavour'd, that the paſſions which are not to be rooted up (becauſe they are of Nature's planting) be yet ſo diſcreetly

creetly check't and depreſt, that they grow not to that enormous tallneſs, as to overtop a man's intellectual power, and caſt a dark ſhadow over his ſoul.

A rational authority muſt be maintained, a continency and dominion of one's ſelf, that there be not an impotent profuſion, and we be never ſo affected with any thing, but that the object may ſtill be able to warrant and juſtifie the affection, both for the nature and degree of it.

Which rule if we ſtrictly obſerve, and apply it to the preſent caſe, we ſhall rarely meet with any temporal concern that ought to move us much: both for the littleneſs of ſuch things themſelves, and that we have ſo unſpeakably greater things in our view and deſign.

In conformity therefore to our ſo great Expectation, we ought more particularly to watch and repreſs our inclinations, appetites, and affections towards each ſeveral ſort

ſort and kind of objects which time and this preſent ſtate hath within the confines of it. As,

How contemptuouſly ſhould we look upon that empty vanity of being *rich*? How coldly and careleſly ſhould we purſue; how unconcern'dly ſhould we loſe any thing that might intitle us to that Name?

The purſuit of ſo deſpicable a trifle, with violent and peremptory deſire, ſo as hereby to ſuffer a diverſion from our deſign for another world, is to make our eternal hope leſs than nothing (For to any man's calm and ſober thoughts *this* will be found as little). And ſo will amount to a total quitting of all our pretenſions to a (better) future ſtate; that is, when we ſo indulge this odd, irrational, this wildly fanciful, and purely humourſome appetite (of which no man can give any tolerable account), that it becomes ravenous, when it devours a man's time, his thoughts, the ſtrength

and

and vigour of his ſpirit, ſwallows up his nobler deſigns, and makes an idle doting about he knows not what, or why, his main buſineſs.

Eſpecially when Conſcience it ſelf becomes a ſacrifice to this impure, unhallowed Idol; and the queſtion is wholly waved, Is this thing juſt and honeſt? and nothing is conſidered, but that its commodious and gainful.

Yet (if herein we will take upon us to paſs a judgment upon other men) it will be no way ingenuous or juſt, that in ſmaller and diſputable matters, we make our own apprehenſions a meaſure and ſtandard to them. They are commonly apteſt to do ſo, who have leaſt ſtudied the matter, and have nothing but their ignorant confidence to intitle them to the Dictator's Chair; where, however, having placed themſelves, they liberally beſtow their cenſures and reproaches on all that think it not fit to throw away their

their own eyes, and see with their bad ones. And conclude them to have no Conscience, who go not according to theirs. And that they cannot but have some base design, who in any thing presume to swerve from their judgment, especially if the advantage, in any temporal respect, happen to lye on that side from which they dissent.

Nothing can indeed so comport with the spirit and design of one who believes himself made for another world, as a brave and generous disdain of stooping to the lure of present emolument, so as thereby to be drawn into any the least thing which he judges not defensible by the severest Rules of Reason and Religion; which were to quit a serene Heaven for mire and dirt.

There is nothing in this world of that value, or worthy to be bought so deer, as with the loss and forfeiture of the rest and repose of a mind quiet, benign, peaceful, and well pleased with it self. It is enough

enough if one find himſelf, by difficulties which he cannot maſter, conſtrained to diſſent from perſons above exception wiſe and pious, placidly, and without unbecoming confidence, to go on in the way which his preſent judgment allows, carrying with him a modeſt ſenſe of humane infirmity, and how poſſible it is the error may lye on his own part: Having, yet, to relieve him againſt that ſuppoſition, the clearneſs of his own ſpirit, the conſcience of his innocency of any ill diſpoſition or deſign; of his inſtructibleneſs and preparedneſs to admit a conviction if he err. And be he never ſo fully perſwaded about the thing in difference, yet to conſider the ſmallneſs of it, and how little cauſe he hath of glorying, if he know in this matter more than others, who, poſſibly, know ten times more than he, in far greater and more important matters.

But, in matters clearly determi-

ned by common agreed Principles, to prevaricate out of an indulgence to meer appetite; To give up one self to practices apparently immoral and flagitious, only to comply with, and left he should not satisfie sensual desires, is the Character of one who hath abandoned the common hope of all good men; and who, that he may have his lot with beasts in this world, dreads not to have it with Devils in the other.

And it is upon the same ground, equally unbecoming them that pretend to this hope, to be visibly concern'd and discompos'd for losses and disappointments they may meet with in this kind, when unexpected events withstand their having much of this world, or deprives them of what they have. It becomes them that reckon their good things are to come hereafter, to shew by their equal deportment and cheerful aspect in any such case, that they apprehend not themselves toucht in their most

moſt conſiderable Intereſts. Yea, though they ſuffer not loſſes only, but injuries; and beſides that they are damnifi'd (as much as ſuch things can ſignifie) they find themſelves wrong'd; and though further trouble and danger threaten them in the ſame kind, They ſhould evidence how much it is above the power either of chance or malice, not only to make them miſerable, but even to diſturb or make them ſad. That they are not happy by a caſualty; And that their happineſs is not in the command of them who cannot command their own. That it only depends on the inward conſtitution and frame of their own ſpirits, attempered to the bleſſed objects of the inviſible world, whereby they have the aſſurance of enjoying them fully hereafter, and the preſent grateful reliſhes thereof in the mean time: and hence, That they can be happy without the world's kindneſs, and in deſpite of its unkindneſs. That they

have somewhat within them, by which they are enabled to rejoyce in tribulation; being troubled on every side, yet not to be distress'd: To *take joyfully the spoiling of goods, knowing within themselves they have in Heaven a better and enduring substance.* Not to suffer or discover any perturbation or disquiet. Not to have their Souls ruffled or put into disorder; Nor let any Cloud sit on their brow, though dark and dismal ones seem to hang over their heads.

And the same absurdity it would be to indulge to themselves an unbounded liberty of sensual pleasures. For that looks like a despair of futurity; as if a day were a mighty gain for eating and drinking, because to morrow we must dye. An abstemious shyness here is comely. A tasting only the delights, whereof others suffer themselves to be ingulft. A prudent reservedness and restraint, so as that what shall cause with others an unbeseeming transport, and

and diffusion of themselves, be entertain'd, not with a Cynical morosity, but a pleasant composure, and well order'd complacence; keeping a due and even distance between levity and sourness.

Yet there is a natural retiredness in some mens tempers; and in others an aversion to pleasures, proceeding only of a rational estimate of their emptiness and vanity in themselves; which may, however, much fall short of what the present case requires: The exigency whereof is no way satisfied, but where such a moderation is the product of a comparative judgment between the delights of the present, and those of the future state: When one so enjoys anything in this world, as to be under the power of nothing, because of the more prevailing influence he is under from the power of the world to come: When his Faith is the Parent of his Sobriety; and his denial of worldly lusts flows from the expectation of the blessed

hope: When, becauſe he more highly prizes, and leſt he forfeit eternal pleaſures, he ſo behaves himſelf towards all temporary ones, as neither to abuſe thoſe that are lawful, nor to be abuſed by the unlawful; not to exceed in the one, nor to touch with the other.

Thus alſo ought we to look upon Secular Honours and Dignity; neither to make them the matter of our admiration, affectation, or envy. We are not to behold them with a libidinous eye, or let our hearts thirſt after them. Not to value our ſelves the more for them if they be our Lot: nor let our eye be dazled with admiration, or diſtorted with envy, when we behold them the ornaments of others.

We are not to expreſs that contempt of them, which may make a breach on civility, or diſturb the order and policy of the Communities whereto we belong. Though this be none of our own Country, and

and we are ſtill to reckon our ſelves but as pilgrims and ſtrangers while we are here; yet it becomes not ſtrangers to be inſolent or rude in their behaviour, where they ſojourn; how much ſoever greater value they may juſtly have of their own Countrey. We ſhould pay to Secular Greatneſs a due reſpect, without Idolatry, and neither deſpiſe nor adore it; conſidering at once the requiſiteneſs of ſuch a thing in the preſent ſtate, and the excelling glory of the other. As, though in prudence and good manners, we would abſtain from provoking affronts towards an *American Sachim*, or *Sagamore*, if we did travel or converſe in their Countrey; yet we could have no great veneration for them, having beheld the royal pomp and grandeur of our own Prince, eſpecially he who were himſelf a Courtier and Favourite to his much more glorious Soveraign, whom he is ſhortly to attend at home, could have no great temp-

tation to sue for Offices and Honours, or bear a very profound intrinsick homage to so mean and unexpressive an Image of Regality.

It can surely no way become one who seeks and expects the *honour* and *glory* which is conjunct with *immortality*, to be fond of the airy titles that poor Mortals are wont to please themselves with; or to make one among the obsequious servile company of them whose business it is to court a vanishing shadow, and tempt a dignified trifle into the belief it is a Deity; to sneak and cringe for a smile from a supercilious brow, and place his Heaven in the disdainful favours of him, who, it may be, places his own as much in thy homage (so that it befalls into the Supplicant's power to be his Creator whose Creature he affects to be). What eye would not soon spy out the grosness of this absurdity? And what ingenuity would not blush to be guilty of it?

Rom. 2. 7.

it? Let, then, the joyful expectants of a bleſſed immortality, paſs by the buſie throng of this fanciful Exchange; and behold it with as little concern, as a grave Statesman would the ſports and ludicrous actions of little Children; and with as little inclination of mind, as he would have to leave his buſineſs, and go play with them; beſtowing, there, only the tranſient glance of a careleſs or a compaſſionate eye, and ſtill reſerving their intent ſteddy views for the glorious hope ſet before them.

And with a proportionable unconcernedneſs ſhould they look on and behold the various alternations of Political Affairs; no further minding (either the conſtitution or adminiſtration of Government) than as the Intereſt of the univerſal Ruler, the weal and ſafety of their Prince or Countrey are concerned in them: But how many under the ſpecious pretence of a publike ſpirit, make it their whole buſineſs to inſpect

and pry into these affairs, even with a most meanly private and interested one! watching over the Publike beyond the bounds of their own Calling; and with no other design, than to catch at an opportunity of serving their own turns! How many that stand perpetually at a gaze, in a suspenceful expectation how things will go! either joying or hoping to behold any favourable prognosticks to the Party whereto they have thought fit to addict themselves. Glad, or desirous to see it ingross power, and grasp the sum of things, not from any sense of duties towards God's Vicegerents; not from love of Justice, or study of publike advantage; but that the happier lot may befall or remain to themselves: These men are absorpt, and swallowed up of the spirit of this World, contempered only to this sublunary Region, concorporate with the earth, so as to partake in *all its* pangs and paroxisms, and tremulous motions. By the beat-

beating of their pulſe you may know the ſtate of things in this lower World, as if they were of the ſame piece, and had but one ſoul with it. Let them ſee times and a ſtate of things on earth ſuitable to their Genius, and you put a new life and ſoul into them. Reduce them to a deſpair here, and (ſo little communion have they with the affairs of that other Countrey) the moſt ſpecious inviting repreſentation that can be made to them of the world to come, hinders not, but their hearts languiſh and dye, and become as ſtones within them.

But that lofty ſoul that bears about with it the living apprehenſion of its being made for an everlaſting ſtate, ſo earneſtly intends it, that it ſhall ever be a deſcent and vouchſafement with it, if it allow it ſelf to take notice what buſie mortals are doing in their (as they reckon them) grand negotiations here below. And if there be a ſuſpition of an aptneſs

or inclination to intermeddle in them to their prejudice to whom that part belongs, can heartily say to it (as the Philosopher to the jealous Tyrant) *We of this Academy are not at leisure to mind so mean things. We have somewhat else to do than to talk of you.* He hath still the image before his eye, of this world vanishing and passing away; of the other, with the everlasting affairs and concernments of it, even now ready to take place, and fill up all the stage: and can represent to himself the vision (not from a melancholick fancy or crazed brain, but a rational faith, and a sober well instructed mind) of the World dissolving, Monarchies and Kingdoms breaking up, Thrones tumbling, Crowns and Scepters lying as neglected things. He hath a Telescope through which he can behold the glorious appearance of the Supream Judg, the solemn state of his Majestick Person, the splendid pomp of his magnificent and vastly numerous retinue;

retinue; the obſequious Throng of glorious Celeſtial Creatures, doing homage to their Eternal King; the quick celerity of the emiſſitious Partiſans covering the face of the Heavens with their ſpreading wings, and diſperſing themſelves into all the four Winds to gather the Elect: The univerſal ſilent attention of all to that loud-ſounding Trumpet that ſhakes the pillars of the world, pierces the inmoſt caverns of the earth, and reſounds from every part of the incircling Heavens: The many Myriads of joyful Expectants ariſing, changing, putting on glory, taking wing, and contending upwards, to joyn themſelves to the triumphant Heavenly Hoaſt: The Judgment ſet: The Books opened: The frightful amazed looks of ſurprized Wretches: The equal adminiſtration of the final Judgment: The adjudication of all to their eternal ſtates: The Heavens roll'd up as a ſcrowl; the Earth, and all things therein, conſumed and burnt up. And

And now what ſpirit is there any more left in him towards the trivial affairs of a vaniſhing world! How indifferent a thing is it with him, who bears himſelf higheſt in a ſtate of things whereof he foreſees the certain haſtning end! Though he will not neglect the duty of his own place, is heartily concerned to have the knowledg and fear of God more generally obtained in this apoſtate world; and is ready to contribute his utmoſt regular endeavours for the preſervation of common peace and order in ſubſerviency hereto. Yet abſtractedly, from theſe conſiderations, and ſuch as have been before mentioned, he is no more concerned who is uppermoſt, than one would, paſſing by a ſwarm of Flyes, which hath the longeſt wings, or which excels the reſt in ſprightlineſs or briskneſs of motion. And for himſelf, he can inſert this among his moſt ſerious thankſgivings, That while the care is incumbent on others, of watching

watching over the publike peace and ſafety, he may ſit ſtill, and converſe with God, and his own more ſedate thoughts. How ſecure is he in this, That infinite Wiſdom governs the world! That all things ſhall be diſpoſed the beſt way, to the beſt and moſt valuable ends! That an afflicted ſtate ſhall never befall unto good men, but when it is fitteſt, and moſt conducible it ſhould do ſo! That the proſperity carnal appetite covets, is never denied them, but when it would be pernicious! How calm is he in the midſt of external troubles! How placid and ſerene a ſpirit inhabits his peaceful breaſt! When all things are ſhaken round about him, he is not ſhaken. He bears all ſort of troubles, but creates none to others, nor is diſturbed by any himſelf.

But they that delight to ſee this world rolling or fixed, as may moſt ſerve their private purpoſes; and have a perpetual quarrel

rel with it, while it looks not kindly upon them. Their life is bound up in it, and their pretences to another, are but the languid faint notions of what they never heartily believe nor desire.

Upon the whole matter, Nothing is more agreeable to this great expectation, than a steady restraint, and moderation of our passions towards things without us: That is, all the several sorts of external objects and affairs, that so variously invite, and tempt our observation and regard in this our present state.

2. 2. I next add: A further congruity, if we pretend to this expectation, is, *That we be not over-much taken up in minding the body.* For this looks like a design (or that inconsistent wish) to have our present state perpetuated; And that the thoughts are remote from us of a change for a better. As if notwithstanding all that

that the Divine Goodneſs hath promiſed concerning the future inheritance of the free and heaven-born Seed, This did ſtill lye nearest our hearts, *O that Iſhmael might live in thy ſight!* And that the belief did miſerably languiſh with us of any better portion than what our eyes do already behold: Together with the apprehenſion of a ſpiritual being in us, to be ripened into a compleat and actual capacity of enjoying what is better. It is true, that all the exorbitant workings of thoſe meaner and ignoble paſſions that are moved by objects and occaſions without, and forreign to us, have the body for their firſt and laſt, their ſpring and ſource, their center and end. But thence it becomes the more proper, and requiſite, that we draw nearer this their ſeat and center, and ſtrike at the root; and, in killing that inordinate love and ſolicitude for the body, mortifie them all at once.

We

We are indeed so far to comply with the pleasure of our Maker, as not to despise the mean abode which he hath assigned us for a while in the body. But withall, to take heed lest we so cross and resist it, as to make caring for the body our whole business: which he hath only enjoyn'd us, in subserviency to an unspeakably greater and more important business. Its health and welfare ought upon very valuable accounts to be carefully preserved by all prudent means. But to indulge its slothful desires, and comply with its licentious wild cravings, is far beneath us, a base unmanning of our selves, and would signifie as if so absurd a conceit had past with us into a setled judgment, That a reasonable immortal spirit was created only to tend and serve a Brute. It is monstrous to behold, with how common consent multitudes that professedly agree in the belief of the immortal nature of their souls, do yet agree to debase and enslave

enſlave them to the meaneſt ſervility to their mortal bodies; ſo as theſe are permitted to give Laws to them, to preſcribe them rules of living, and what their daily employment ſhall be. For obſerve the deſigns they drive, and what is the tendency of their actions and affairs (whence the judgment is to be made concerning their inward thoughts, deliberations, and reſolves) and is not the body the meaſure and mark of them all? What import or ſignification is there in this courſe, of a deſign for futurity? And (which increaſes the folly of it to a wonder) they can make a ſhift to go on thus from year to year, and take no notice of the abſurdity! They agree to juſtifie each one himſelf, and one another. The commonneſs of the courſe takes away all ſenſe of the horrid madneſs of it. And becauſe each doth as the reſt do, they ſeem to imagine they all do well; and that there is nothing exceptionable in the

Non qua eundum eſt ſed qua itur. *Sen.*

in the caſe; and go on * (as the ſequacious ſheep) not the way they ought, but which they ſee others go before them.

But, if any place could be found for calm and ſober thoughts, What would be reckon'd a greater impertinency, than to be at ſo great pains for maintaining a bodily life, without conſidering what that life ſhall ſerve for? To employ our utmoſt care to live, but to live for we know not what? It becomes us to be patient of the body, not fond. To treat and uſe our bodies as things ſhortly to be put off, and laid aſide. To care for them, not for their own, but the works ſake we have to do in them; and leave it to them to indulge and pamper the body, who expect never to live out of it. Not to concern our ſelves, that the circumſtances of our bodily ſtate be ſuch as will gratifie our appetites, but anſwer the Ends for which our Maker thought fit we ſhould live a while in the body.

Reckon-

Reckoning with our ſelves, We are lodg'd in theſe mean receptacles (though ſomewhat commodiouſly, yet) but for a little while, and for great purpoſes; and more minding our journey, and home, than our entertainment in our Inn. Contentedly bearing the want of bodily accommodations, that are not eaſily to be compaſs'd, and the preſſure of unavoidable bodily infirmities; not much pitying our ſelves becauſe of them; nor deeply regretting it, if wants and pains pinch our fleſh; nay, though we ſee the outward man periſhing, ſo we can but find the inward renewing day by day.

3. That we ſet our ſelves with the whole intention of our ſouls, to mind the concernments of the future ſtate, the inviſible things of the other world; and direct the main ſtream of our thoughts, deſires, hopes, and joys, thitherward. For how highly juſtifiable and becoming is it, that we principally mind 3.

mind the ſtate and things we were made for? We ſhould therefore make theſe familiar to our ſelves, and uſe our ſpirits to thoſe more noble and pleaſant Theams: Recounting often, how unworthy it is of them to grovel in the duſt, or chuſe the objects of their converſe by ſuch meaſures only as are taken from ſenſe.

It is an iniquity which, though God may be ſo gracious to us as to forgive, we ſhould not eaſily forgive to our ſelves; That we have ſo often choſen to converſe with empty trifles, while ſo great things have invited our thoughts in vain.

Their remoteneſs from ſenſe hath little of excuſe in it, and unworthy a reaſonable Creature. Methinks they ſhould be aſhamed to alledg it, who conſider themſelves furniſhed with an intellectual power that doth, in many other inſtances, controle the judgment of ſenſe, and impeach it of falſhood. Would we not bluſh to

profeſs

profeſs it for a Principle, That there is nothing real that exceeds the ſphere of our ſenſe?

We would reckon it a part of modeſty, not to aſcribe too much to our own Underſtandings, or preſume too far upon our intellectual Ability, againſt the Judgment of ſage and knowing perſons. How is it then, that we think it not immodeſt to oppoſe the apprehenſions of our dull and incapacious ſenſe, to the common faith and reaſon of all good and wiſe men, that are or have been in the world, as well as our own? If we have not ſeen what the ſtate of things is in the other world, are we not told? And have we not enough to aſſure us, that 'tis He hath told us, whoſe nature cannot ſuffer him to impoſe upon us, or repreſent things otherwiſe than they are? Who elſe can be the Author of ſo common a perſwaſion? If any man had been the firſt Inventor of the opinion, *That there is another ſtate of things to ſuc-*

ceed

ceed to this; would he not have assumed it to himself, that he was so? Would he not have own'd it, and glory'd in it? Or would not some or other of his proselyted disciples have preserved his name and memory, and transmitted them to posterity? Could so vast a sect be without an Head or Master, known and celebrated among men?

Less plausible Opinions find some Owner; Why is it not said, Who was the first Broacher of this? And if we can find no other Parent for it, but He who was the Parent of our beings, how grateful should such a discovery be to us, both for His sake, and its own? Upon His account, we should surely think it worthy to be believed; and upon its own, to be considered and seriously thought on, with greatest delight and sense of pleasure.

Many things that we reckon considerable upon much lower accounts, we so believe, as to let them engage our hearts, and influence

fluence our practice, upon much lower evidence: How intirely are mens spirits taken up many times about meaner matters, whereof they have only a (much more uncertain and fallible) report from one another? What pretence can we have, less to regard the testimony of Him that made us, discovering to us things so great, so important, so rational in themselves, even though they had not been so expressly revealed? Let us therefore drive the matter to a clear and short issue, and come to a resolution with our selves: Have we reason to believe such things, or no? If we can so far impose upon our selves, as to think we have not; or be tempted into so abject, so unrequired, and so unwarrantable a self denial, so base an esteem of our own beings, as to account the things of this earth and present world have enough in them to answer any Ends we can suppose our selves made for; Let us no longer mock the world, by

pretending to believe what we believe not: but if this be our ſetled judgment, and we will avow and own it, That we believe theſe things; Let us no longer expoſe and make our ſelves ridiculous, by counter-acting our own profeſſed belief in matters of ſuch moment, pretending to believe, and diſregarding them at the ſame time. 'Tis abſurd and fooliſh to believe ſuch things, and not mind them much, or not let our ſouls and our practice be commanded and governed by them: Not to have our deſires, and cares, and hopes, and joys, influenc'd thereby to the uttermoſt; How rational is it, here, to be deeply ſolicitous, that by the unſuitableneſs of our own ſpirits we defeat not our own expectations! How pleaſant and delectable (that danger being provided againſt) to ſit down and compare our preſent with our expected ſtate! what we are, with what we hope to be ere long! To think of exchanging

changing ſhortly, infirmity, pollution, darkneſs, deformity, trouble, complaint; for power, purity, light, beauty, reſt, and praiſe! How pleaſant, if our ſpirits be fitted to that ſtate! The endeavour whereof is a further congruity in the preſent caſe, *viz.*

4. That we make it our principal buſineſs to intend our ſpirits, to adorn and cultivate our inward man. What can more become us, if we reckon we have ſomewhat about us made for immortality, than to beſtow our chief care upon that immortal part? Therefore to neglect our ſpirits, confeſſedly capable of ſo high an eſtate; to let them languiſh under waſting diſtempers, or lye as the Sluggard's Field, overgrown with thorns and briars, is as vile a ſtarr as we can put upon our ſelves and our own profeſſion. 4.

We ſhould therefore make this the matter of our earneſt ſtudy,

What would be the proper improvements and ornaments of our ſpirits, and will moſt fitly qualifie them for the ſtate we are going into; and of our daily obſervation how ſuch things thrive and grow in us. Eſpecially we ſhould not be ſatisfied, till we find in our ſelves a refinedneſs from this earth, a thorough purgation from all undue degrees of ſenſual inclination and affection; the conſumption of our droſs by a Sacred Fire from Heaven, a Spirit of Judgment and of Burning, an aptitude to ſpiritual exercises and enjoyments; high complacency in God, fervent love, a worſhipping poſture of ſoul, formed to the veneration of the eternal Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Power, Holineſs, profound humility, and abnegation of our ſelves; a praiſeful frame of ſpirit, much uſed to gratulations and thankſgivings; a large and univerſal love, imitating, as much as is poſſible, the Divine: A proneneſs to do good to all; a ſteady compoſure,

ſure, and ſerene temper of ſpirit; the repoſe and reſt of a contented mind, not boiſterous, not apt unto diſquiet, or to create ſtorms to our ſelves, or the world; Every way ſuitable to the bliſsful Regions, where nothing but perfect purity, entire devotedneſs to God, love, goodneſs, benignity, well-pleaſedneſs, order, and peace, ſhall have place for ever.

This we ought to be conſtantly intent upon, as the buſineſs of our lives, our daily work, to get our ſpirits ſo attempered and fitted to Heaven, that if we be asked, What deſign we drive? What are we doing? We may be able to make this true anſwer, We are dreſſing our ſelves for Eternity: And ſince nothing is required hereto, that is ſimply impoſſible, nothing but what is agreeable to our natures, and would be a perfection to them; How worthy and commendable an ambition were it to be always aſpiring? not to reſt or take up beneath the

highest pitch of attainable excellency in these kinds, reckoning every degree thereof a due to our natures; and that they have not what belongs to them, while any thing of real intrinsick moral goodness is yet wanting; and not only due, but necessary, and what we shall have need of in reference to the state we are shortly to enter upon; that *except such things be in us, and abound, we cannot have an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom.*

And should we, pretending to such an expectation, omit such endeavours of preparing our selves, it were alike thing as if an unbred Peasant should go about to thrust himself, with an expectation of high Honours and Preferments, into the Prince's Court; or as if a distracted man should expect to be employed in the greatest and most intricate affairs of State; or an uninstructed Idiot take upon him to profess and teach Philosophy.

There-

Therefore let us consider; Are we conscious of no unfitness for that blessed state? To dwell in the presence of the holy God? To be associated with the Heavenly Assembly of pure intellectual spirits? To consort and joyn with them in their celebrations and triumphant Songs? Can we espy no such thing in our selves, as an earthy mind, aversation to God, as pride, disdain, wrath, or envy, admiration of our selves, aptness to seek our own things, with the neglect of others, or the like? And do not our hearts then misgive? and tell us we are unready? not yet prepared to approach the Divine Presence, or to enter into the habitation of his Holiness and Glory? And what then have we to do, but set our selves to our preparatory work? To set our watches, make our observations, take strict notice of all the deflections and obliquities of our spirits, settle our methods, and hasten a redress? Do not we know this is the

time and ſtate of preparation? And ſince we know it, how would the folly torture us, by reflection, of having betrayed our ſelves to a ſurprital! None are ever wont to enter upon any new ſtate without ſome foregoing preparation. Every more remarkable turn or change in our lives, is, commonly (if at all) foreknown) introduced by many ſerious fore-thoughts. If a man be to change his dwelling, employment, condition, common diſcretion will put him upon thinking how to comport with the place, buſineſs, converſe, and way of living he is next to betake himſelf to: And his thoughts will be the more intenſe, by how much more momentous the change. If he be to leave his Country, with no probability of returning; If he be deſigned to a ſtation, the circumſtances whereof carry any thing of awfulneſs in them; if to publike buſineſs, if to Court-attendances, With what ſolemnity and addreſs are ſuch things undertaken!

dertaken! How loath and ashamed would one be, to go into such a condition, being totally unapt, not at all knowing how to behave himself in it! But what so great change as this can the nature of man admit? That a soul, long shut up in flesh, is now to go forth from its earthly Mansion, and return no more; expecting to be received into the glorious Presence of the Eternal King, and go act its part among the perfected Spirits that attend His Throne! How solicitous endeavour of a very thorough preparation, doth this case call for!

But how ill doth the common course of men agree to this! who never have such matters in their thoughts! who so much neglect not their very Hogs, as they do their Spirits!

5. That we have much conversation with God. He is the only full and permanent Good; therefore the endeavour of becoming 5.

coming very inward with him, doth beſt agree with the expectation of a ſtate perfectly good and happy.

To expect this, and converſe only with ſhadows and vaniſhing things, is to expect to be happy without a happineſs; or that our happineſs ſhould betide us as a caſual thing, or be forc'd upon us at laſt whether we will or no. But ſince our happineſs in God is on his part not neceſſary, but vouchſafed and gratuitous, depending on meer good pleaſure; Is it our beſt way of ingratiating our ſelves with him, to neglect him, and live as without him in the world? To keep our ſelves ſtrangers to him all our days, with a purpoſe only of flying to him at laſt, when all things elſe that were wont to pleaſe us, are vaniſhed and gone? And if we could ſuppoſe his Wiſdom and Juſtice to admit his forgiving ſo provoking contempt of him, and receiving an exiled Soul forced out from its earthly abode, that to the laſt mo-

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ment of it would never look after him, or have to do with him; yet can it be supposed, that its own habitual aversation to him, could allow it to be happy in him? Especially being increased and confirmed by its consciousness and sense of guilt? How can these but make it banish it self, and in a sullen enmity and despair perpetually flee the Divine Presence? What can in this case be more natural to it, than to give up it self to eternal solitary wandrings, as a Fugitive from God? to affect to be ever enwrapt in its own darkness, and hidden from his sight, and be an everlasting tormentor to it self? Can we be happy in him whom we do not love? or love whom we will not know or be acquainted with?

What sure ground of hope can we imagine to our selves, that our reconciliation and acquaintance with God shall ever be brought about, if it be not done while we are here in the body? Will we be so

ſo vain, as to cheriſh an hope that not only affronts the viſible import of God's revelation, but the very reaſon of things, and the natural tendency of our own ſpirits? Nor indeed (if we would conſider better) can we poſſibly hope for what we deſire not, or whereto our hearts are in an habitual diſaffection, otherways than (in the preſent caſe) negatively; and that our infidelity permits us not to fear the contrary: yea, and the lively hope of a bleſſedneſs in God, as it includes deſire, would certainly infer that Purity (the image of his own) that could never fail to incline our hearts to him, and which would habituate us to a courſe of walking with him in inward communion.

And this were comely and agreeable to our pretences; If while we profeſs our ſelves made for another ſtate, we retire our ſelves from the fading things that put a vanity into this; and ſingle out, by our own choice, the ſtable

good

good which we expect ever to enjoy. How befitting is it to pass by all things with neglect, and betake our selves hither with this sense?

Lord, I have viewed the World over in which thou hast set me; I have tried how this and that thing will fit my spirit, and the design of my Creation; and can find nothing in which to rest, for nothing here doth it self rest, but such things as please me for a while, in some degree, vanish and flee, as shadows, from before me. Lo, I come to Thee, the Eternal Being! the Spring of Life! the Center of rest! the Stay of the Creation! the Fulness of all things! I joyn my self to thee; with thee I will lead my life, and spend my days, with whom I aim to dwell for ever; expecting when my little time is over, to be taken up, ere long, into thy Eternity.

And since we who live under the Gospel, have heard of the Redeemer, of the dignity of his Person, of his high Office and Power, of his merci-

merciful design, and great Atchievements for the restoring of lapsed and lost souls:

It is most agreeable to our apprehensions of the vanity of this present state, and our expectations for the future, that we commit our selves to him. That with intire trust and love, devotedness and subjection, we give our selves up to his happy conduct, to be led by him to God, and instated into that eternal blessedness which we look for.

His *Kingdom is not of this world* (as we profess not to be). We cannot be innocently ignorant, that its constitution and frame, its laws and ordinances, its aspect and tendency in its self, and the whole course of its administration, are directed to that other state. *He hath overcome death, and him that had the power of it; hath brought life and immortality to light, is the first begotten from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept*; hath opened Heaven to us, and

and is himſelf aſcended, and entred as our victorious triumphant Captain and Fore-runner. He is adorned with higheſt Power, and hath ſet up an Univerſal Kingdom, extended to the utmoſt bounds of this apoſtate World, and the vaſter Regions of innocent and conſtantly loyal Spirits. His Proclamations are iſſued out, his Enſigns diſplayed, to invite and call in whoſoever are weary of the ſin and vanity of this wretched world, of their alienation from the life of God, of living in the midſt of death; to joyn themſelves to Him, the Prince and Lord of Life; and be led by Him to the immortal ſtate. If the preſent ſtate of things appear diſmal to us; if we reckon it a woful ſpectacle to behold ſin and death reigning, wickedneſs and mortality acting their combined parts, to waſte the world, and lay it deſolate; If we would deliver our ſelves, and eſcape from the common ruin; are ſeriouſly deſigning for Heaven,

and

and that World in which Death hath no place, nor any ſhadow of Death; Let us betake our ſelves to Him, enroll our Names, put our ſelves under his Banners and Diſcipline, ſtrictly obſerving the Laws, and following the guidance of that our inviſible Lord, who will be *Author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey him*; and *ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God through him.* How dear ſhould he be to us! How chearfully ſhould we truſt him, how dutifully ſerve him, how faithfully adhere to him, both for his own ſake, and that of the deſign he hath in hand for us, and the pleaſant ſavour of Heaven and Immortality which breathes in both!

But if we neglect Him, and diſown our relation to him; or if we let days and years go over our heads, wherein we drowſily ſlumber; roll our ſelves in the duſt of the earth; and, while we call our ſelves Chriſtians, forget the reaſon and importance of our own Name,

Name, and think not of our being under his call and conduct to the eternal Kingdom and Glory. This is perverſly to reject what we ſay (only) we ſeek; to diſclaim and renounce our pretences to Immortality; to blaſt and damn our own great hopes.

Laſtly, It is congruous to our expectation of ſo great things after death, That we live in a chearful pleaſant expectation of it. For what muſt neceſſarily intervene, though not grateful in it ſelf, ſhould be reckon'd ſo, for the ſake of that which is. This, only, can upon the *beſt* terms, reconcile us to the grave, That our greateſt hopes lye beyond it; and are not hazarded by it, but accompliſh't. 7.

Although, indeed, nothing were to be expected hereafter; yet ſo little ſuitable entertainment doth this world afford to a reaſonable ſpirit, that the meer wearineſs of beholding a Scene of vanity and folly,

folly, might well make a receſs acceptable. For is it ſo grateful a thing to obſerve the confuſed ſcramble and hurry of the world? How almoſt every one makes it his buſineſs to catch from another what is worth nothing! With what toil, and art, and violence men purſue, what when they embrace they find a ſhadow! To ſee deluded Mortals, each one intent upon his own particular deſign, moſt commonly interfering with anothers; ſome impos'd upon by others over-reaching Wit, and all by their own folly: Some lamenting their loſſes, others their ſhort and unſatisfying acquiſitions: Many pleaſing themſelves with being mock'd, and contentedly hugging the empty Cloud; till Death comes and ends the ſtory, and ceaſes the buſie agitation; that is, with ſo many particular perſons, not with the World. A new ſuccretion ſtill ſpringing up, that continue the Interlude, and ſtill act over the ſame parts, *ad tædium uſq;*!

What

What ſerious perſon? who that is not in love with impertinency and foolery, would much regret it, to cloſe his eyes, to have the Curtains drawn, and bid good-night to the world, without ever wiſhing to ſee the morning of ſuch another day! And even they that have the world moſt in their power, and can command what they pleaſe for the gratifying of their appetites, without the contradiction and controll of others, What can they enjoy more to morrow than they did yeſterday? or the next year than this? Is it ſo much worth the while to live, to ſee a few more perſons bow the knee? To extend power a little further? To make another eſſay what pleaſure ſenſe can taſt in ſome or other hitherto unexperimented Rarity? What more peculiar guſto this or that thing will afford? and try the other Diſh? or to renew the ſame reliſhes over again?

He

He whoſe creative fancy could make him golden Mountains in a dream, create him a Prince of Nations, give him to enjoy the moſt delicious pleaſures of the world in Idea; might, with ſome plauſible ſhew of reaſon, be deem'd the happier man, than he that hath, and is all this indeed: for his toil is leſs, and his victories unbloody, his pleaſures not ſo impure. However, one would think that to ſuch whoſe utmoſt attainments end only in the pleaſure of their ſenſe, and have but this Epiphonema, *Now, let us ſit down, eat, drink, and be merry*; A little time might ſuffice for buſineſs of no more weight; and that no man, after he hath once ſeen the courſe of the world, and taſted of its beſt delicacies, ſhould greatly wiſh for a renewal, or long-continued repetition of ſo fulſome vanities.

But the moſt find not the world ſo kind; and are not ſo much exerciſed in the innovating of plea-

pleaſures, as miſeries (changes being their only remedies, as the Moraliſt ſpeaks); or in bearing (more ſadly) the ſame every day's burden; and drawing out the ſeries of their calamities in the ſame kind through the whole courſe of their time.

And ſurely theſe things conſidered, there wants not what might perſwade a Sceptick, or even a perfect Infidel, as to another world, not much to be in love with this.

For upon the whole, let but the caſe be thus put: Is it not as good to do nothing, as to be buſie to no purpoſe? And again, Is it not as good to be nothing, as to be, and do nothing? Sober reaſon would judg, at leaſt, there were but little odds.

But now; If ſuch conſiderations as have been mentioned, would ſuffice to ſtate the matter in *equilibrio*, to make the ſcales even; Ought the rational ſober belief of a bleſſed immortality do nothing

to

to turn the ballance? Ought the love of God to do nothing? The desire and hope of a state perfectly good and happy, quiet and peaceful; of living in the Region of undefiled innocent love and pleasure; in the communion of holy and blessed spirits (all highly pleased, not in their own only, but one another's happiness; and all concentring in the admiration and praise of their common Parent and Lord) Ought all this nothing to alter the case with us? or signifie nothing to the inclining our minds to the so unspeakably better part?

Methinks since we acknowledg such an order of intelligent (and already happy) Creatures, we should even blush to think they should be spectators of our daily course and (too plainly discovered) inclinations, so disform and unagreeable to all the Laws and dictates of reasonable nature? What censures, may we think, do they pass upon our follies? Are those

thoſe things great in their eyes, that are ſo in ours? In leſſer matters (as ſome interpret that paſſage) indecencies are to be avoided, becauſe of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits. May we not then be aſhamed that they ſhould diſcern our terrene diſpoſitions? and ſee us come, ſo unwillingly, into their conſort, and happy ſtate? Although our preſent depreſſing circumſtances will not ſuffer us to be in all things, as yet, conformable to their high condition, we ſhould however carry it as Candidates thereto, ſtudying to approve our ſelves; waiting and longing to be tranſum'd and taken up into it. 1 Cor. 8.

And ſince we have ſo high and great an expectation, and 'tis underſtood and known, That the very perfection and end of our Beings is no otherwiſe attainable, than by putting off our ſordid fleſh, and laying aſide this earthly Appurtenance; that yet there ſhould be ſo fixed and prevailing an

an averſion to it, is a moſt unaccountable thing, and one of the greateſt Problems in Nature.

I ſay, prevailing: For admit what is like to be alledg'd, that an addictedneſs to the body is by natural inclination; ought not the Laws of a Superior to prevail over thoſe of the inferior nature? And is not the love of God a higher natural Law than that of the body? to whom here our ſervice is little, yea our diſſervice much; and from whoſe moſt deſirable commerce we ſuffer ſo uncomfortable a diſcluſion by the ſad circumſtances of our bodily ſtate? Are we more nearly aly'd to a piece of Clay, than to the Father of our ſpirits? And again, Is not every thing neareſt to its ſelf? and obliged to place love there, rather than on any inferior thing (at leaſt) how nearly ſoever united? ſince there can be no pretence of any ſuch nearer union, than of a thing with it ſelf? And are not our ſouls and our bodies (though united,

united, yet) distinct things? Why then should not our souls, that are capable of understanding their own interest, mind that first; intend most their own perfection and improvement, and begin their charity at home? It is not strange, that what is weaker and more ignoble, should affect union with what is above it, and a spring of life to it: But when it is found burdensome, nothing forbids, but that the superior Being may be well content, upon fair and allowable terms, to be rid of the burden. Therefore though flesh and blood may reluctate and shrink at it, when we think of laying it down; yet it becomes immortal spirits to consider their own affairs, and be (more principally) intent upon what will be their own advantage. If so mean a Creature as a sorry Flea, finding it can draw a suitable aliment from our bodies, affect to dwell there, and is loath to leave us; It were a ludicrous pity to be there-

therefore content to endure its troubleſome vellications, becauſe we fear the poor Animal ſhould be put to its ſhifts, and not to be otherwiſe able to find a ſubſiſtence. 'Tis true, that the great Creator and Lord of the Univerſe, hath not permitted us the liberty of ſo throwing off our bodies when we will (which otherwiſe are in dignity far more beneath our ſpirits, than ſo deſpicable a Creature is beneath *them*). And to his diſpoſe that hath order'd this conjunction for a time (whether we look upon it as an effect of his ſimple pleaſure, or of his diſpleaſure) we muſt yeild an awful and a patient ſubmiſſion, till this part of his Providence towards us have run its courſe, and attain'd its ends. And then, how welcome ſhould the hour of our diſcharge and freedom be, from ſo troubleſome an Aſſociate! which upon no other account than that of duty towards the Author of our beings, one would more endure, than to have the

the moſt noyſome offenſive Vermine always preying upon his fleſh. At leaſt, (though the conſideration of our own advantage had no place with us in this matter) the ſame ſenſe of duty towards our great Creator, which ſhould make us patient of an abode in the body, while he will have it ſo; ſhould alſo form our ſpirits to a willing departure, when it ſhall be his pleaſure to releaſe us thence. But that neither a regard to his pleaſure, nor our own bleſſedneſs, ſhould prevail againſt our love to the body, is the unaccountable thing I ſpeak of. And to plead only, in the caſe, the corruption of our natures that ſets us at odds with God and our ſelves, is to juſtifie the thing by what is it ſelf moſt unjuſtifiable; or rather (as ſome that have affected to be ſtyl'd Philoſophers have been wont to expedite difficulties, by reſolving the matter into the uſual courſe of Nature, which is) to reſolve the thing into it ſelf, and ſay, *It is ſo, becauſe*

because it is so, or is wont to be; and indeed, plainly to confess there is no account to be given of it. This being the very thing about which we expostulate, that reasonable nature should so prevaricate: The commonness whereof doth not take away the wonder, but rather render it more dreadful and astonishing.

The truth is, the incongruity in the present case is only to be solved by redress; by earnest strivings with God, and our own souls, till we find our selves recovered into a right mind; into the constitution and composure whereof a generous fortitude hath a necessary ingrediency; that usually upon lower motives refuses no change of Climate, and will carry a man into unknown Countreys, and through greatest hazards in the pursuit of honourable enterprizes, of a much inferior kind.

It is reckon'd a brave and manly thing to be in the temper of one's mind a Citizen of the World (mean-

meaning it of this lower one). But why not rather of the Universe? And 'tis accounted mean and base that one should be so confin'd by his fear or sloath to that spot of ground where he was born, as not upon just inducement to look abroad, and go for warrantable and worthy purposes (yea, if it were only honest self-advantage) as far as the utmost ends of the earth. But dare we not venture a little farther? These are too narrow bounds for a truly great spirit. Any thing that is tinctur'd with earth, or savours of mortality, we should reckon too mean for us; and not regret it, that Heaven and Immortality are not to be attained but by dying; so should the love of our own souls, and the desire of a perpetual state of life, triumph over the fear of death.

But it may be alledged by some, That 'tis only a solicitous love to their souls, that makes them dread this change. They know it will not fare with all alike hereafter, and

know not what their own lot shall be.

And is this indeed our case? then, what have we been doing all this while? and how are we concerned to lose no more time?

But too often a terrene spirit lurks under this pretence; and men alledg their want of assurance of Heaven, when the love of this earth (which they cannot endure to think of leaving) holds their hearts.

And (a little to discuss this matter) what would we have to assure us? Do we expect a vision or a voice? or are we not to try our selves; and search for such characters in our own souls, as may distinguish and note us out for Heaven? Among these, what can be more clear and certain than this, Phil. 3. 20, 21. *that we have our hearts much set upon it?* They that have their conversations in Heaven, may from thence expect the Saviour, *who shall change* Gr. *their vile bodies* (the bodies of their humiliation, or low abject state) *and make them like his own glorious body.*

God

God, *who will render to every man according to his works*, will give them that *by patient continuance in well doing, seek honour, and glory, and immortality, eternal life.* They that *set their affections* (or mind) *on the things above, not those on the earth, when Christ shall appear, who is their life, shall appear with him in glory.* Mistake not the notion of Heaven, or the blessedness of the other world; render it not to your selves a composition of sensual enjoyments; Understand it (principally) to consist in perfect holiness and communion with God (as his own word represents it, and as reason hath taught even some Pagans to reckon of it) and you cannot judg of your own Right by a surer and plainer Rule, than *that eternal blessedness shall be theirs whose hearts are truly bent and directed towards it.* Admit we, then, this Principle; and now let us reason with our selves from it: We have a discovery made to us of a future state, of blessedness in God, not as desirable only in it self, but as attainable, and

Rom. 2. 6, 7.

Col. 3. 2, 3, 4.

and possible to be enjoyed (the Redeemer having opened the way to it by his blood, and given us at once both the prospect and the offer of it) so that it is before us as the object of a reasonable desire. Now either our hearts are so taken with this discovery, that we above all things desire this state, or not. If they be, we desire it more than our earthly stations and enjoyments, and are willing to leave the world and the body to enjoy it; and so did falsly accuse our selves of a prevailing aversion to this change. If they be not, the thing is true, that we are upon no terms willing to dye, but the cause is falsly (or partially) assigned: It is not so much because we are unassured of Heaven, but (as was above suspected) because we love this world better, and our hearts center in it as our most desirable good.

Therefore we see how unreasonably this is, often, said, We are unwilling to change states, because we are unassured; the truth is, they are unassured,

assured, because they are unwilling; and what then ensues? They are unwilling because they are unwilling. And so they may endlesly dispute themselves round, from unwillingness to unwillingness. But is there no way to get out of this unhappy Circle? In order to it, let the case be more fully understood; Either this double unwillingness must be refer'd to the same thing, or to divers: If to the same thing, it is not sense; they say what signifies nothing: For, being to assign a cause of their unwillingness to quit the body, to say, *because they are unwilling*, (*viz.* of that) is to assign no cause, for nothing can be the cause of it self. But if they refer to divers things, and say, *They are unwilling to go out of the body, because they are unwilling to forsake Earth for Heaven*; The case is then plain, but sad, and not alterable, but with the alteration of the temper of their spirits. Wherefore let us all apply our selves (since with none this is so fully done, that no more is needful) to the

the ſerious endeavour of getting our ſouls purged from the droſs of this world, and enamoured of the purity and bleſſedneſs of Heaven, ſo the cauſe and effect will vaniſh together; we ſhall find that ſuitableneſs and inclination in our ſpirits to that bleſſedneſs, as may yeild us the ground of a comfortable perſwaſion that it belongs to us us; and then, not be unwilling, though many deaths ſtood in our way, to break through to attain it.

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